

DOCTORAL THESIS

Black British Ballet Race, Representation and Aesthetics

Bourne, Sandie Mae

Award date:
2017

Awarding institution:
University of Roehampton

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

**Black British Ballet: Race, Representation and
Aesthetics**

by

Sandie Mae Bourne BA, MA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of PhD

Department of Dance
University of Roehampton 2017

ABSTRACT

This thesis documents black British dancers' experiences in the UK ballet industry in order to investigate the relationship between race, representation and aesthetics. Racial discrimination and institutional racism are key topics of this thesis, which will assess whether Eurocentric perceptions have contributed to black dancers' slow progression in ballet. The historical construction of an 'ideal' white ballet body is analysed in relation to negative stereotypes of the black body that emerged from evolutionary theory and pseudo-science during the nineteenth century. By exploring these ideas from the past, concepts and ideologies can be connected to the present perceptions of the black dancing body in twenty-first century ballet.

Due to the lack of documentation of the experiences of British black ballet dancers, secondary literature on African American dancers helps map their historical representation, as documented by dance critics and writers from the 1930s onwards. Through interviews with dance practitioners carried out between 2002 and 2015, including directors, teachers, administrators, and dancers who trained or worked at major institutions like the Royal Ballet School, the Legat School of Russian Ballet and the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance, this study presents their first-hand experiences. These interviews provide vital evidence that potentially discriminatory acts have occurred within ballet training institutions and companies. These interviews provide insight on the complex issues of race in dance, highlighting where problems are established and offering suggestions for improvement. This thesis also provides a platform for black dancers to be identified and acknowledged in British dance history. The evidence is not only an important contribution to an issue that affects all black dancers, but also increases awareness within the wider arts industry and indeed within British society. Its implications are far-reaching and relate to black dancers throughout the world who have trained or worked in the ballet industry.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
INTRODUCTION	1
RESEARCH	1
METHODOLOGY	6
CHAPTERS	8
PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE	9
CHAPTER ONE	11
BALLET ROOTS AND BALLET BODIES	11
1.0 INTRODUCTION	11
1.2 EARLY ‘CLASSICAL’ DANCE FORMS	12
1.2.1 INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE	13
1.2.2 EGYPTIAN ‘CLASSICAL’ DANCE	14
1.2.3 INDIAN AND EGYPTIAN CREATIVE INFLUENCES IN EARLY BALLET REPERTOIRE	15
1.3 THE AFRICAN (EGYPTIAN) AND EUROPEAN (GREEK) AESTHETIC CONNECTION	17
1.3.1 SUMMARY OF NON-EUROPEAN CONNECTIONS	20
1.4 BALLET AESTHETICS AND WHITENESS	21
1.5 THE CHANGING ARTISTIC ‘AESTHETIC’ FORM AND THE BALLET BODY	25
1.6 BALLET AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GENDER ROLES	25
1.7 REPRESENTATIONS OF MALE BALLET DANCERS	27
1.7.1 MALE DANCERS, BODIES AND ROLES	28
1.8 FEMALE DANCERS’ BODIES	31
1.8.1 THE REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE BALLET DANCERS IN BRITAIN	32
1.9 THE BALANCHINE BODY	35
1.10 CONCLUSION	36
CHAPTER TWO	38
PERCEPTIONS OF THE BLACK BODY	38
2.0 INTRODUCTION	38
2.1 PERPETUATION OF IDEOLOGIES	39
2.2 ‘PRIMITIVE’ BLACK BODIES AND SCIENCE	41
2.3 ‘UNATTRACTIVE’ BLACK PEOPLE?	43
2.4 THE SEXUALISATION OF THE BLACK BODY	44
2.5 THE BLACK MALE BODY	47
2.6 THE BLACK FEMALE BODY	48
2.7 EARLY DANCE WRITERS ON ‘PRIMITIVE’ DANCE	53
2.7.1 LILLY GROVE (1855–1941)	54
2.7.2 ETHEL URLIN (1858–1935)	55
2.7.3 WILFRID DYSON HAMBLY (1886–1962)	56
2.7.4 LEO FROBENIUS (1873–1938)	57
2.7.5 CURT SACHS (1881–1959)	58
2.8 CONCLUSION	59

CHAPTER THREE	61
PRIMITIVE: ITS ASSOCIATIONS WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN DANCE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON AMERICAN DANCE CULTURE	61
3.0 INTRODUCTION	61
3.1 WHAT IS PRIMITIVE DANCE?	61
3.2 AFRICAN AMERICAN CONCERT STYLES AND PRIMITIVE DANCES	62
3.3.1 CHARLES WILLIAMS (1886–1978)	67
3.3.2 EDNA GUY (1907–1982) AND HEMSLEY WINFIELD (1907–1934)	69
3.4 STEREOTYPING ‘PRIMITIVE’ DANCE	73
3.4.1 JOSEPHINE BAKER (1906–1975)	73
3.4.2 BILL ROBINSON (1878–1949)	76
3.5 EARLY AFRICAN AMERICAN THEORISTS ON PERFORMING ARTS	77
3.6 THE NEW AFRICAN AMERICAN DANCE AESTHETIC	78
3.6.1 KATHERINE DUNHAM (1909–2006)	79
3.6.2 PEARL PRIMUS (1919–1994)	80
3.7 PRIMITIVE MODERN DANCE	82
3.7.1 ISADORA DUNCAN (1877–1927)	83
3.7.2 RUTH ST. DENIS (1879–1968) AND TED SHAWN (1891–1972)	83
3.7.3 MARTHA GRAHAM (1894–1991)	84
3.8 PRIMITIVISM IN BALLET	86
3.9 CONCLUSION	89
CHAPTER FOUR	91
DANCE CRITICS AND BLACK DANCERS IN BALLET	91
4.0 INTRODUCTION	91
4.1 JOHN MARTIN, DANCE CRITIC	92
4.2 EARLY RACIAL INTEGRATION IN BALLET – 1930s	93
4.3 GEORGE BALANCHINE AND EARLY INTEGRATED WORK WITH AFRICAN AMERICANS	95
4.4 1930s – BLACK BALLET COMPANIES	98
4.4.1 KATHERINE DUNHAM, BALLET AND BALLET NÈGRE	98
4.4.2 AMERICAN NEGRO BALLET	101
4.5 1930s – AFRICAN AMERICANS AND MODERN DANCE	101
4.6 1940s – EMPLOYMENT FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN DANCERS IN BALLET	105
4.7 1940s–1950s – MODERN DANCE SUMMARY	107
4.7.1 1940s–1950s – BLACK BALLET COMPANIES: SUMMARY	108
4.8 1950s – AFRICAN AMERICAN BALLET PIONEERS AND THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES	109
4.8.1 ARTHUR BELL (1927–2004)	109
4.8.2 JANET COLLINS (1917–2003)	110
4.8.3 RAVEN WILKINSON (1935–)	111
4.8.4 ARTHUR MITCHELL (1938–)	112
4.9 CATEGORISING THE BLACK DANCER	114
4.9.1 ERNESTINE STODELLE	116
4.9.2 ARNOLD HASKELL	116
4.10 OTHER DANCE CRITICS	118
4.11 THE DECONSTRUCTION OF THE BLACK DANCING BODY IN BALLET	119
4.12 CONCLUSION	121
CHAPTER FIVE	123

STRIVING FOR EQUALITY IN THE WORLD OF BALLET:	123
5.0 INTRODUCTION	123
5.1 ARTHUR MITCHELL AND THE SOCIAL CLIMATE OF AMERICA	124
5.2 THE INTEGRATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN DANCERS INTO MAINSTREAM AMERICAN MODERN DANCE	125
5.3 GEORGE BALANCHINE'S INTEGRATED COMPANY DREAM	127
5.4 ARTHUR MITCHELL AND GEORGE BALANCHINE	128
5.4.1 RACE AND REPRESENTATION IN AGON	129
5.4.2 MITCHELL'S OTHER ROLES	132
FIGURE 1: MITCHELL PICTURED PERFORMING PUCK IN A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, THORPE, 1989.	133
5.5 ACTIVISM AND AFRICAN AMERICAN DANCERS	136
5.5.1 ALVIN AILEY (1931–1989)	138
5.6 CREATING THE DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM	140
5.7 NEW YORK CITY BALLET AND THE DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM	143
5.8 DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM IN LONDON	146
5.9 CONCLUSION	150
CHAPTER SIX	152
SOCIO-CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF BALLET	152
6.0 INTRODUCTION	152
6.1 SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES IN DANCE	152
6.2 FINANCIAL VALUE AND HIGH-ART STATUS	154
6.3 HIGH ART AND BALLET	157
6.4 BREAKING THROUGH HIGH ART AND SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS	158
6.5.1 BLACK BRITISH PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF BALLET	163
6.5.2 BLACK PARENTS AND CULTURAL ANTIPATHY	164
6.5.3 BLACK PARENTS AND BALLET	166
6.6 'GAY' BALLET	167
6.7 CONCLUSION	168
CHAPTER SEVEN	170
BRITISH BALLETS COMPANIES' COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMMES	170
7.0 INTRODUCTION	170
7.1 THE FOUNDING OF CHANCE TO DANCE	170
7.1.1 DARRYL JAFFRAY (1944–): DANCE AND EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE	171
7.1.2 JANE HACKETT (1953–)	173
7.2 RESEARCH IN CUBA	174
7.2.1 DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM (DTH): AN INSPIRATION FOR THE ROYAL BALLET	176
7.2.2 CTD PROGRAMME AND DTH COLLABORATION	177
7.3 ORGANISING THE CHANCE TO DANCE SCHEME	179
7.3.1 PLANNING FOR THE CHILDREN	180
7.4 SOCIAL DEPRIVATION AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND	182
7.5 CHANCE TO DANCE AND ACCESS TO JOINING BALLET COMPANIES FOR CHILDREN	185
7.6 REFLECTING ON CTD	186
7.7 BRITISH DANCE TEACHERS	188
7.8 ORGANISATIONS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	191
7.9 BLACK BRITISH BALLET DANCERS	193
7.10 SUMMARY OF CHANCE TO DANCE	194

7.11 DANCE TRACK PROGRAMME	195
7.12 LISA THOMAS: WORKING WITH DANCE TRACK (2008–2011)	196
7.13 AESTHETICS, AUDITIONS, PHOTOGRAPHS	199
7.14 SUMMARY OF DANCE TRACK	202
7.15 CONCLUSION	203
 CHAPTER EIGHT	 204
 BLACK BRITISH DANCERS’ TRAINING EXPERIENCE IN BALLET	 204
8.0 INTRODUCTION	204
8.1 BLACK DANCERS TRAINING AT THE ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL	205
8.2 BRENDA GARRETT-GLASSMAN (1955–)	205
8.2.1 GARRETT-GLASSMAN AND SCHOOL SHOWS	208
8.3 EVAN WILLIAMS (1971–)	209
8.4 DARREN PANTON (1976–)	212
8.4.1 PANTON AND SCHOOL SHOWS	215
8.5 SHEVELLE DYNOTT (1986–)	218
8.6 RBS DIRECTORS FROM 1998	220
8.7 DYNOTT’S PRE-EMPLOYMENT PERFORMANCES	222
8.8 CHANTELE GOTOBED (1986–)	224
8.9 SUMMARY	226
8.10 BLACK BALLET DANCERS AND OTHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS	227
8.10.1 DENZIL BAILEY (1965–)	227
8.10.2 BEN LOVE (1965–)	229
8.10.3 CAROL STRAKER (1961–)	230
8.10.4 JULIE FELIX (1957–)	236
8.11 CONCLUSION	238
 CHAPTER NINE	 241
 BLACK DANCERS AND WORKING EXPERIENCE	 241
9.0 INTRODUCTION	241
9.1 EVAN WILLIAMS – BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET (1991–1994)	242
FIGURE 2: WILLIAMS PICTURED PERFORMING <i>PETRUSHKA</i> , CORBIS, 1991	244
9.2 BEN LOVE (1996–1997)	246
9.2.1 LOVE AND THE NORTHERN BALLET THEATRE (1998–1999)	247
9.3 FIRST BLACK DANCERS IN LONDON FESTIVAL BALLET	248
9.4 BRENDA EDWARDS	249
9.5 BAILEY’S BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH LONDON CITY BALLET	252
9.5.1 BAILEY AND THE AUDITION PROCESS WITH LFB (1988–1994)	253
9.5.2 BAILEY’S WORKING EXPERIENCES WITH LFB	254
9.6 DARREN PANTON	255
9.7 JERRY DOUGLAS (RBC 1997–2000)	256
9.8 PANTON AT THE LONDON CITY BALLET (1992–1996)	258
9.9 SHEVELLE DYNOTT, ENGLISH NATIONAL BALLET (2005–PRESENT)	259
9.10 CHANTELE GOTOBED	261
9.10.1 GOTOBED AND THE NORTHERN BALLET (2007–2008)	262
9.11 BALLET BLACK	263
9.12 CONCLUSION	266
 CONCLUSION	 269

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	281
APPENDICES	282
BIBLIOGRAPHY	285
INTERVIEWS	301

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my wonderful supervisors Dr. Stacey Prickett and Dr. Andrée Grau for all their enthusiastic support for all the years' dedication and guidance during this process. A big thanks to Kate Mason and Marsha Lowe for proofreading my work.

A big thanks to all the people who gave up their time for interviews: Neville Adams, Adesola Akinleye, Denzil Bailey, Delia Baker, Rob Berkeley, Brian Bertscher, Chris Copland, Deborah Bull, Hilary Carty, Shevelle Dynott, Mark Elie, Julie Felix, Florence Kollie, Brenda Garrett-Glassman, Anu Giri, Chantelle Gotobed, Dollie Henry, Christian Holder, Darryl Jaffray, Desmond Kelly, Ben Love, Geraldine Morris, Richard Majewski, Matthew Paluch, Darren Panton, Leon Robinson, Malachi Spalding, Carol Straker, Lisa Thomas, Kenneth Olumuyiwa Tharp, Evan Williams and others.

To all those who have helped me, a big thank you, especially to my family: my wonderful mother Gloria who has seen me go through all my degrees; my great partner Clive who has believed in me and stood by my side; my supportive sister Jacqueline Scott and my beautiful children Olivia and Theo who started this journey from the womb.

INTRODUCTION

Ballet, which upholds the white, male aristocratic values of its roots, has not been very accessible to black people although this is slowly changing. There is very little documentation concerned with black people's involvement in ballet but there is a history which relates both to individual dancers' experiences and the establishment of black ballet companies. (Adair, 1992:167)

RESEARCH

When entering a ballet career, it can take up to 17 years of training to become a professional dancer and there are many steps to achieving this goal. Some children start with movement classes at their local dance school from the age of two. If they have the required physique that can be moulded to the requirements of a professional ballet dancer, including long limbs and an athletic build (Foster, 1997:241), and if they are talented and funded, students can go on to attend a professional dance institution like the Royal Ballet Junior Associates from the age of 11 to 16, and possibly further training as Senior Associates from age 16 to 19 (Royal Ballet School, 2015 online). British ballet culture is recognised throughout the world through its training establishments, such as the Royal Ballet School, and through its dance education and standard examinations based on the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD)¹ (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:51). Once students complete their training, they enter the realms of employment, and if they avoid any serious injuries, they may enjoy a career that lasts into their thirties or forties. However, when a black dancer enters the British ballet world, their experience of its culture can be daunting. Not only do they have to withstand the usual tribulations of the ballet profession during training or employment, but at some stage they may encounter racial discrimination, at both an individual and institutional level, in a predominantly white environment.

This research focuses on the effects of the historical representation of black people in ballet, and on how black dancers have progressed and have been presented on stage over the

¹ Dance critics Debra Craine and Judith Mackrell (2010:381) note:

The Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) (Known prior to 2001 as Royal Academy of Dancing) British dance examination board. It was founded on 31 Dec. 1920 by Philip Richardson in conjunction with an eminent group of dancers and teachers including Adeline Genée and Édouard Espinosa. It was originally known as the Association of Operatic Dancing in Great Britain and its aim was to monitor standards of classical ballet training. [...] it developed into the world's largest examining and training body, holding examinations for all standard of ballet throughout the world.

past 80 years. The emphasis on black experiences does not negate the fact that discrimination within the industry can happen to dancers of any ethnic origin, as racial discrimination is complex and affects many cultures. This research investigates why 'black' dancers of African, Caribbean, and black British descent are or appear to be under-represented in British ballet companies, and whether ethnicity is a contributing factor to their slower progression. For the purposes of this study, the term 'black British' refers to the wave of immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean who came to Britain after the Second World War and were encouraged to come to help rebuild the economy (Owusu: 2000).

Covering many topics, the research refers to race, representation, and the aesthetics of dance. Inevitably, some difficult choices had to be made regarding which subjects were only referenced in passing and which merited more detailed analysis. However, the areas that require additional research or documentation are highlighted in the relevant sections.

There are few scholarly works on this topic, although examples are found in British dance scholars like Christy Adair and Ramsay Burt, who have mentioned black ballet dancers in some of their work (Adair, 1992:160-181). For instance, in Chapter Eight of Adair's (1992:167-170) Women and Dance: Sylphs and Sirens, titled 'Black power – black dance', she gives a brief overview of black dancers regarding the biased perceptions and the aesthetic excuses given for why they could not perform ballet. She also provides a brief insight into British perceptions, including an example of a company not wanting black dancers to perform ballet during the 1980s because of their biased aesthetic opinions. Adair also offers an outline of key successful African American artists like Raven Wilkinson and Arthur Mitchell who entered the profession and succeeded despite encountering racism. These artists are also mentioned in Chapter Four of this thesis, 'Dance critics and black dancers in ballet', as they are relevant to the history and development of black dancers in ballet and similar to black British dancers' comparable experiences of racism. Adair and Burt have also documented black dance, such as Adair's book on the Phoenix Dance Company (which was originally a black British company from 1981 to 2001) (Adair, 2007), and Burt's work on Josephine Baker (1998:57-83) and Katherine Dunham (1998:160-195). They have also collaborated to document black dance in Britain through a series of projects called

“British Dance and the African Diaspora”, which started in 2012 and which “explored the memories of British based dancers who are black and celebrated their contributions to British dance” (De Montfort University, Leicester, 2017 online).

Along with their research project, Adair and Burt held an exhibition titled British Dance: Black Routes, covering the 1940s to the present day, at the Slavery Museum in Liverpool from 13 September 2013 to 23 March 2014 (International Slavery Museum, online 2017). Journalist Sanjoy Roy (2013) reported on the exhibition and notes Burt’s views:

What about black people’s stories? “They tend to get missed out of British dance history”, he says – and that absence became a prime motive for him and fellow academic Christy Adair to put together a new exhibition [...]. The exhibition aims not to be comprehensive or definitive, but rather to highlight some moments and movements within the spectrum of black dance in Britain. “Maybe”, says Burt, “this exhibition can help rewrite history to include them”.

Their two-year project led to the book also named British Dance: Black Routes, to be published in 2017 (Adair and Burt, 2017) which is a great achievement. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that black dancers performing a European dance form like ballet has yet to be fully accredited or documented in British and dance history. Examples of other books that acknowledge black dance in Britain are Voicing Black Dance: The British Experience – 1930s-1990s (Adewole and Matchett, Prescod 2007) and Hidden Movement: Contemporary Voices of Black British Dance (Carty, Ramdhanie and Brookes 2013).

Other secondary sources found on black ballet dancers were by dance scholars like Brenda Dixon Gottschild, who has documented African American dancers extensively with her four books:

Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance Dance and Other Contexts (Contributions in Afro-American & African Studies) (1996);
Waltzing in the Dark: African American Vaudeville and Race Politics in the Swing Era (2002);
The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool (2003); and
Joan Myers Brown and the Audacious Hope of the Black Ballerina (2012)

Topics of race, representation and aesthetics are addressed in all of these texts. Additional work on black dancers in ballet was found in Richard A. Long (1989:117-127); Thomas DeFrantz (2000: 179-195); and Dawn Lille Horwitz (2002:317-339). Other resources include articles in dance journals, for example: Zita D. Allen's Blacks in Ballet (1976: 65-70); Jonnie Greene's (1997:86-91) Classic Black Dance and Dancers; and Joselli Audain Dean's (2002:19-23) The Marginalization of African American Ballet Dancers as Reflected in Dance Critical Literature: 1980–1990, to mention a few. Biographies and autobiographies on black ballet dancers include Yaël Tamar Lewin's (2011) Night's Dancer: The Life of Janet Collins and later publications on more current dancers like Carlos Acosta (2007), Misty Copland and Michael DePrince. From the 1930s onwards, dance critics and writers like John Martin, Arnold Haskell, Edwin Denby, Margaret Lloyd, Ernestine Stodelle and Don McDonagh, who are all mentioned in Chapter Five ('Dance critics on black dancers in ballet'), provide material for discourse analysis in order to highlight social-cultural perspectives throughout the decades.

Tracing ballet's origins and development, alongside the historical representation of black people, offers a dual analysis that can help unpack how perceptions of black ballet dancers were established over time. Whilst ballet is one of the most documented dance art forms (Thomas, 1993:165), secondary sources on black dancers in this profession are difficult to find. Nevertheless, Julie Felix, a British ballet dancer of English and Caribbean parentage, published Brickbats and Tutus (Plimmer, 2015), the first biography of this kind. The book is based on her experience of the ballet industry as a woman of colour who trained in Britain during the 1970s at Rambert School of Classical Ballet (now known as Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance), then working in the USA with the African American company Dance Theatre of Harlem from 1977 to 1987.

There are many factors that contribute to black British dancers not progressing in a career in ballet. This may include, for example, issues related to what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1987) described as 'cultural capital', which is briefly discussed in Chapter Seven, 'Social-cultural perceptions of ballet'. This thesis also examines how black culture has inspired

themes in western ballet and other modern dance forms, highlighting how its influence became part of the innovative process of ballet's history.

British ballet culture has been established through a number of prominent ballet companies, namely the Royal Ballet; the English National Ballet Company; the Birmingham Royal Ballet and the Northern Ballet. British ballet's international recognition was established in the late 1920s with Dame Ninette de Valois' founding of the Royal Ballet in 1926 (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:51). From observation alone, there seem to be very few black ballet dancers in British ballet companies, and these dancers are largely unknown to the general public. An informal survey of the main UK ballet companies' websites in 2016 revealed, for example, that the Royal Ballet lists 96 dancers of which five (5.3%) dancers are black or mixed race. These comprise Francesca Hayward, a principal dancer born in Nairobi of mixed parentage; Fernando Montañó, a soloist from Colombia; Marcelino Sambé, a soloist from Portugal; Eric Underwood, an African American British soloist; and Solomon Golding (1.1%), the sole black British dancer, an artist of the company (Royal Opera House, Royal Ballet, 2016). There are currently 70 dancers in the English National Ballet and six (8.7%) of these dancers are from the African Diaspora. However, only one dancer (1.4%) is black British – Shevelle Dynott from London. Other black dancers in the company include: Osiel Gouneo, a guest artist from Cuba; Brooklyn Mack, an African American guest artist; Yonah Acosta, a principal dancer from Cuba; Junor Souza, a first soloist from Brazil; and Precious Adams, an African American artist.

Currently, the Birmingham Royal Ballet employs 62 dancers, four of whom (6.4%) are black or mixed-race: Tyrone Singleton, a principal; Céline Gittens, a first soloist; Brandon Lawrence, a first artist; and Edivaldo Souza de Silva. Only Singleton and Lawrence are British, whilst Gittens is Trinidadian-Canadian and Souza de Silva is Brazilian (Birmingham Royal Ballet, 2016 online). The Northern Ballet employs 46 dancers and currently employs two (0.9%) black/mixed-race male dancers in the company: South African Mlindi Kulashe, a Coryphée dancer, and black British Luke Francis, a dancer from Birmingham (Northern Ballet, online 2016). This informal survey shows that the four mainstream ballet companies

employ a total of 271 dancers, of which the total number of black British ballet dancers is six – about 2.2%, a percentage roughly consistent with the proportion of black people in the UK at 3% (Index Mundi, 2014). However, it can be argued that this statistical information cannot adequately reflect the realities of black dancers' progression. Part of the purpose of this research is to evaluate why the number of black dancers in the ballet profession is low, and to engage in discussions with black dancers to investigate whether other factors may be at work.

Some 25 dancers and practitioners were interviewed for this thesis, though not all of the interviews were fully transcribed. As this research grew more selective in terms of subject matter, only the most applicable information was chosen for each section. Interviewees not referenced in this study have nevertheless provided valuable information for future research.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995:2). Developed by linguistic scholar Norman Fairclough (1995:2), describes this theory as a “‘three-dimensional’ framework where the aim is to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another: analysis of (spoken or written) language text, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of social-cultural practice”. Some of the critical discourse analysis and theoretical concepts from cultural studies are used to support these research topics and to address the ethnographic and socio-historical references to dance with a practical focus on ‘white’ and ‘black’ cultures, gender, ideologies of the ‘white’ and ‘black’ dancing body, aesthetics, race and representation, class, post-colonial discourse, racism, and institutional racism.

Cultural theorist Paul Willis (1996:1) notes that “institutions and practices, genres and terms of high art are currently categories of exclusion more than of inclusion”. An evaluation of ballet's institutional practices will be examined to assess whether past and present ‘gatekeepers’ maintain the social order, with reference to the exclusion or inclusion of black

dancers in ballet. This is further explored to evaluate whether Eurocentric concepts of 'colonial racialization', as investigated in Chapter Two, is active in British ballet institutions in the form of prejudice or acts of discrimination towards black dancers' progression, at both the individual and institutional level.

For this thesis, the definition of 'institutional racism' is based on the published report of The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (1999) by Sir William Macpherson. The inquiry was commissioned in 1997 by the then Secretary of State, Jack Straw, who ordered an investigation into how the Stephen Lawrence murder case was conducted by the British Metropolitan Police. The report found the British Metropolitan Police's discursive social practices and attitudes to be institutionally racist. Macpherson (6.34:1999) defines 'institutional racism' as:

the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amounts to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. (Macpherson, 2007 online)

Using Macpherson's example of institutional racism, this theory is applied throughout this thesis to examine examples of British ballet culture and their institutional practices, with reference to black dancers' experiences in training and working in this profession. This is also explored through the secondary documentation of African American dancers in Chapters Three, Four and Five and highlighted in the testimonies of black British dancers in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine. The concept of institutional racism in the arts is not a new phenomenon – as scholars Simon Cottle and Anjan Saha found in the Glass Ceiling (2002) report, discriminating acts of institutional racism were active in areas of training and employment, and this has affected the progression of black and Asian managers and administrators in arts-related establishments.

CHAPTERS

This dissertation is divided into nine chapters, each of which uses critical discourse analysis to examine its context. Chapter One, 'Ballet roots and ballet bodies' highlights the early presence of non-western themes that were incorporated into early choreographic works, with a particular focus on ballet repertoire inspired by North African and Egyptian culture and how people from the African Diaspora featured in early ballet history. The second part of the chapter investigates how gender roles were defined, including representations of male and female dancers' bodies and a summary of George Balanchine's ideal body. Chapter Two, 'Perceptions of black bodies', examines Eurocentric ideologies as observed by scientists and biologists such as Charles Darwin, who established the premises for other scholars to evaluate the evolution of 'races', particularly focusing on skin colour. After introducing the concept of the black body as 'primitive' in Chapter Two, Chapter Three explores the subject further in 'Primitive: Its associations with African American dance and its influence on American dance culture'.

Exploring the impact of these racialised concepts of black people, Chapter Four, 'Dance critics on black dancers in ballet', analyses early reviews from the 1930s onwards. This chapter focuses on the works of American John Martin, who commented on many African American ballet performances, which contributed to the sociocultural perceptions of this era. Other dance writers and critics include 1930s British critic Arnold Haskell; American's Edwin Denby; Margaret Lloyd; 1960s dancer/writer Ernestine Stodelle; and dance critic Don McDonagh. Chapter Five, "Striving for equality in the world of ballet: Representations of Arthur Mitchell and the Dance Theatre of Harlem" presents insights on Mitchell's ballet career as the first African American dancer to be employed by the New York City Ballet in 1956. The chapter also follows the founding of his company Dance Theatre of Harlem in 1969, which has inspired many black British dancers to train and work with the company, and led to the creation of the British company Ballet Black in 2001.

Moving to Britain, Chapter Six, 'socia-cultural perceptions of ballet', analyses ballet's status as a high art form in society. It examines cultural capital along with working-class and

African/Caribbean perceptions to evaluate the ways in which students from these backgrounds enter and negotiate the barriers of the genre. Chapter Seven, 'British ballet companies' community outreach programmes', explores the Royal Ballet's Chance To Dance programme and the Birmingham Royal Ballet's Fast Track scheme, which were devised to help children from diverse backgrounds experience ballet in free classes taught in schools in some London boroughs and in the north and south of Birmingham. Through interviews with former employees who kindly shared their experiences, this chapter then evaluates the effectiveness of these programmes and how they nurture dancers from diverse backgrounds, with a focus on students recruited from black British communities. Chapter Eight, 'Black British dancers' training experience in ballet', analyses interviews with black British dancers who trained at institutions like the Royal Ballet or the Legat School of Russian Ballet from 1970 to 2005. Their narratives highlight shared experiences, which are analysed to evaluate whether they were discriminated against in these predominantly white environments. Finally, Chapter Nine, "Black British dancers' work experience", reveals experiences of employment with major British ballet companies such as the Royal Ballet, Birmingham Ballet, English National Ballet, Northern Theatre Ballet and the former London City Ballet. Dancers disclose their work experience with these companies to evaluate whether they were treated fairly, given ballet's Eurocentric origins and traditions.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

I am of Black British/Caribbean descent and I attended dance classes from the age of five at a local dance school in Essex, where I grew up. As a child, when I attended the local ballet classes, the dance teacher used to comment on me and say, "Why does your bottom stick out?" I was persistently told to 'tuck my bottom under' in front of a class of predominantly white dancers. I did not know at the time that these comments were derogatory remarks about my physique and I was unaware that they could be understood as an act of discrimination. I decided to continue my dance training on a professional level at the age of 16. I was fortunate to receive a scholarship to attend a three-year training programme at London Studio Centre in 1985. Whilst training I spoke to other black British dancers about

their training experiences in ballet and it became obvious that discrimination in ballet classes was a common experience. Throughout my professional dance experience, I have spoken to many black dancers who have had a brief career in a ballet company: they too have experienced acts of discrimination from some British ballet institutions. So many have spoken about their experiences, but little has been documented or done about the racism they encountered in ballet. This research has personally been a very sensitive topic because of my experience, therefore it has sometimes been very difficult to convey a balanced argument and remain objective. However, my position gives me an advantage for writing this thesis because of my life experience. My encounters of discrimination whilst training in ballet and listening to other black dancers' experiences is part of my motivation for proceeding with this research.

CHAPTER ONE

BALLET ROOTS AND BALLET BODIES

Ballet, the oldest European theatre dance genre, is rarely, if ever, perceived as being culturally rooted or having been historically implicated in cross-cultural transactions. (Grau, 2010:41)

1.0 Introduction

This chapter investigates how early non-European cultures, such as ancient Indian and Egyptian, influenced creative adaptations in ballet repertoire. These cultures will be examined with reference to how the term 'classical' dance was associated with dance movements: for example, Indian dance was defined as a classical dance, and Egyptian dance was later analysed using classical dance terminology. Whilst the majority of ballet's history starts in Europe, a brief investigation into whether there is an aesthetic/artistic connection between Egypt (Africa) and Greece (Europe) will first be conducted to establish any Africanist links. Ballet is perceived as having white European origins; however, if such links are recognised then ballet's multicultural roots can begin to be acknowledged as an important subject for further research. Throughout this thesis, the socio-cultural discourse between people from the African diaspora and European cultures is examined. The second part of this chapter evaluates the perceptions and representations of 'whiteness' in ballet, with reference to early European hierarchical depictions of power and godliness in stage ballet repertoire. The historical concept of 'whiteness' in ballet is analysed to evaluate its origins, as well as whether it might still be present in productions today. Gender roles in ballet and how they have developed and changed will also briefly be analysed in this section. This section also presents a summary of various socio-cultural norms pertaining to the body, with reference to key dancers who were considered to have an 'ideal' body type. The origins of gender roles and body types in ballet are then evaluated to determine whether there is any difference when these are applied to the black body.

1.1 Documenting ballet's origins

The origins of ballet and how it evolved has been documented by many dance scholars, most of whom have presented this art form as having established its roots in Europe (Clarke and Crisp 1973; Guest 1984; Homans 2010; Kirstein 1984; Lawson 1976; Lee 2002). However, dance critic Robert Greskovic (2005:3) notes that “historians of dance in all its manifestations, as opposed to ballet specialists in particular, look to happenings in early people and their rituals for our deepest dance roots”. Greskovic’s investigation implies that ‘ballet specialists’ have ignored ballet’s early non-European influences, before its European establishment; nevertheless, exploring this subject requires extensive analysis. With reference to the possible scope of ballet history, dance historian June Layson (1994:12) proposed:

A new perspective to a history of ballet would not ignore seemingly atypical events or demote irregularities in order to present a unified whole but would divert attention to the contradictions, culs-de sac, failures as well as achievements, with the intent of revealing the genre in all its historical manifestations.

Layson’s vision of ballet history urges an exploration of areas that are not clearly documented; therefore, this chapter investigates the seldom studied connections between non-western and European cultures. It will focus on non-European cultures, such as India, and particularly on Egypt as an African country, to explore their links to the repertoire of European ballets.

1.2 Early ‘classical’ dance forms

Examples of early dance forms have been found in Madhya Pradesh in the Bhimbetka rock shelters in India and in the tombs and buildings of ancient Egypt. This next section briefly explores the origins of these ancient styles and investigates how one form, Indian dance, became known as a ‘classical’ genre, whilst the other form, Egyptian dance, was described in terms of ‘classical’ ballet terminology.

1.2.1 Indian classical dance

The earliest recorded human dance movements were Palaeolithic stick-figure drawings found in the Bhimbetka rock shelter in India. Historian Upinder Singh (2009:92) notes that “some scenes depict sexual activity, others show people dancing. The dancers convey a sense of rhythmic movement; occasionally they lose their balance and fall”. This discovery illustrates the prominence of dance and its origins as a key socio-cultural component. Greskovic (1998:3) notes that “Indian dance forms appear to have been placed around 6000 B.C”. Over time, these genres of dance influenced other countries in Asia: “in the fifth century, these adaptations were described in the state of Funan, now Cambodia, and by A.D. 450, Indian influence had spread to areas of what is now Vietnam, Malaya, and Java” (Descutner, 2010:52). Dances from Asia and the Middle East are often considered ‘classical’ dance forms. For example, dance scholar Jo Butterworth (2011:191) notes that classical dance is “characterized by grace and precision of movement and by elaborate formal gestures, steps and poses”. Whilst Asian and Middle Eastern dance forms fit this description, other genres from different cultures may also have this framework and could also be considered ‘classical’, although this topic needs further research. Dance critic Arnold Haskell refers to Indian and ballet classical dance forms in his article The Meaning of Classical Dancing and defines them as follows:

The two forms of dancing which have moved me the most are the classical ballet and the classical dance of India. The word ‘classical’ is important. It implies a set of rules that are rigid, that have developed, over a long period, in the sense that languages have developed, and consequently a complex technique that must be mastered. [...] These forms of dance would therefore at first sight appear to be extremely artificial and highly stylized [...].
(Haskell, 1962:55)

Haskell’s research on Indian dance as a classical art form reinforces Butterworth’s definition of classical dance. He also refers to “the Indian *Bharata Nattyam*, the oldest of all dance forms in continuous use and the only one whose technique is set out in detail in a holy book, the *Bharata Sastr*” [emphasis in original]”. (1962:57). When Haskell describes Indian dance as the oldest ‘classical’ form, in the context of this chapter, this shows that a non-European dance form was considered classical long before the development of ‘classical’ ballet. This demonstrates how the label ‘classical’ dance is used to describe different cultures and dance forms. Although more research is required to sustain a more in-depth analysis, it is clear that

both Indian and ballet have established high status and are recognised as stylised, highly technical art forms in both the Western and Eastern parts of the world.

1.2.2 Egyptian 'classical' dance

Some of the earliest documentations of dance were illustrations depicting movements found in North Africa in ancient Egyptian tombs dating from the Fifth Dynasty (2489–2345 BC). An example of “dancing to the clapping of hands” was discovered in the tomb of the Mastaba of Urienptah in Egypt – this can be seen at the British Museum, London (British Museum, 2011 online). Greskovic (2005:3) describes these paintings from the “First Dynasty Egypt, circa 3000 B.C., some reliefs showing a kind of dance/body language. Acrobatic figures on later Egyptian wall paintings and reliefs help illustrate dance methods to further degrees”. The documentation of movements in these paintings demonstrate that dance was a very important part of Egyptian culture. Dance scholar Irena Lexova (2003:32) identified similar movement described in a letter she translated (transcribed by German Historian Fritz Weege), originally written by a man from Syracuse who visited Memphis in Egypt at the end of the fourth century BC. Lexova (2003:32) used classical dance terminology to translate the letter and interpret the dancer's performance through his notes:

Two dancers danced separately or together in harmonious configurations, mixed with pirouettes, soon parting and again approaching each other, the young dancer running after his mate and following her with expressions of tender desire, while she fled from him constantly, rotating and pirouetting [...] This performance was done lightly and energetically in harmonious postures, and seemed to me to exceedingly entertaining.

This description of the dance could be construed as a *pas de deux* from a nineteenth or twentieth-century ballet perspective. Whilst Egyptian dance is not usually categorised as a classical dance style, dance scholar Kariamuwelsh Asante (2003:79) found in ancient Egyptian dance “movements that today would be considered both pedestrian and classical”. She also provides a description of these movements: “Travel[ing] steps such as fast and slow walking, stamping, running, short hops, and leaps were used. [...] The spine could either be stiff or relaxed. [...] Dancers could either speed or retard their movements, following preference or the music. Whole- and half-turns were used” (Asante 2003:79). Asante's account of ancient Egyptian dance shows that it is generically similar to the choreographic repertoire performed by dancers up to the present day. However, it could be

argued that many dance scholars tend to use ballet terms to describe non-ballet movements, as Karen Clippinger notes: “dance movements are often described using terminology from ballet due to its greater standardization. [...] This use of common ballet terminology is not meant to limit the application of the information to ballet technique; dancers can make parallel applications to similar movements in the dance form of their choice” (xii:2016). Clippinger’s point suggests that Asante and Lexova may have used ballet terminology in this way to define ancient Egyptian dance. Were these early movements precursors of ballet movements, or were they simply dance movements? This area also requires further research to clarify whether ancient Egyptian dance is a form of classical dance.

Other cultures are documented as having influenced ancient Egyptian dance, as Asante (2003:79) notes: “Around 1500 B.C., Bayaderes, temple dancers of India, came to Egypt. They moved in soft lines – never moving sharply or bending – and influenced the Egyptian styles”. Over time many foreign visitors had an influence on Egyptian culture. Asante’s (2003:80) research notes that “Ancient Egypt was a nation rich in culture, history and innovation. The integration of dance into its society was important and the Egyptians’ appreciation for dance and its development still continue to influence the dance world, as it laid the foundations for rhythm, movement, choreography, and style”. Whilst dance from Egypt was not considered a classical dance form, it is telling that scholars have chosen to describe its movements using ballet terminology. Considering the origins of ancient dance forms in India and Egypt, these cultures are used as examples to illustrate how they were choreographically integrated as a source of inspiration for early ballet repertoire.

1.2.3 Indian and Egyptian creative influences in early ballet repertoire

Ballet repertoire from the seventeenth century was inspired by ancient Greek and Roman civilisations, as described by Adair (1992:83), Kirstein (1984:29) and Lee (2002:27). Nineteenth-century Russian ballet repertoire took inspiration from India, Spain and ancient Egypt because they “offered visually arresting scenery, provocative costuming, and a measure of local color in the music and the choreography” (Scholl, 1994:23). Nevertheless, non-European cultures, such as ancient Indian and Egyptian civilisations, also had an

influence on early ballet repertoire. For example, dance scholar Judith Lynne Hanna explains that “the ancient classical traditions of the huge geographical area and large population of India have also influenced ballet. [...] As early as October 1830, a ballet having an Indian background, *Le Dieu et la Bayadère*, was choreographed by Filippo Taglioni and performed in Paris” (1988:32). Other examples of ballet with Indian dance themes include *La Bayadère* (1877), choreographed by Petipa “for St Petersburg’s Bolshoi Theatre, with a libretto concerning ‘exotic’ India by Sergei Khudekov, a prominent balletomane and historian” (Greskovic, 1998:41). Co-founder of the New York City Ballet and dance historian Lincoln Kirstein (1984:26) further comments on ballet’s ‘exotic’ inspirations in the nineteenth century: “Great international exhibitions began to be organized in Paris and other European capitals after 1850. Choreographers saw exotic provincial and colonial dances. They could increase authentic borrowings, since designers had gained more knowledge from scientific archaeology and research in unfamiliar architectural styles”. Although choreographers were inspired by exotic themes, as suggested by Kirstein, these were only adaptations of cultural dances performed through interpretations of costume, gestures and movements (Shay, 2008:129), rather than traditional dances modified for the stage, as later represented in the 1920s by Asadata Dafora’s west African repertoire (Foulkes, 2002:60). More about Dafora’s work will be discussed in later chapters.

Egyptian themes in ballet repertoire are evident in the choreography of Italian dancer and composer Jean-Baptiste Lully (who worked in King Louis XIV’s courts). He created *Ballet de la nuit* (1653) and Louis XIV performed the character of the ‘sun king’ – a nickname he adopted and liked to be referred by in the court (Lee, 2002:68; Bernal 1991:177). Lee (2002:68) explains: “Just as Egyptian rulers of antiquity had identified themselves with the sun, so too, from this time on Louis embraces the idea that he was ‘*Le roi soleil*,’ the Sun King who was the light, the center, the energy source of France”. Egyptologist Théophile Obenga explains:

Egyptian philosophy was of a solar and cosmic orientation. The material sun was known as *Ra*, that is the “sun-god”. Many deities were associated in some way with the sun-god *Ra*, such as *Ra-Atum*, the creator [...] The Pharaoh himself assumed the title “Son of *Ra*” (*sa-Ra*) from the 5th Dynasty (2496–2345 BC) onwards. [...] The pyramid was the chief symbol of the sun-god *Ra*. It was believed to help the Pharaoh in his transition from the earthly to the celestial realm. (Obenga, 2003:40)

Other dance scholars refer to the influence of the Egyptian sun-king in ballet; for instance, Kirstein established that other great leaders before King Louis XIV, like Julius Caesar, “identified himself with the sun; Pharaoh had been Ra, Re, or *roi*” (1984:75). The sun king is associated with many ancient gods: the Romans called their sun god Apollo, whilst the Egyptians had ‘Ra’ or ‘Re’, as Obenga described above. According to historian Martin Bernal (1991:177), during King Louis XIV’s reign, “there was an issue of whether the Moderns were now morally and artistic superior to the Ancients”. Bernal’s comments could be used to explain King Louis XIV’s behaviour: by naming himself a sun king, he suggested that he was influenced by ancient religions and the concepts of divine godly power that he embodied in his modern world. Further examples of ballets repertoire inspired by ancient Egyptian themes were the Russian ballets The Pharaoh’s Daughter (1862) by Marius Petipa, and Cléopâtre (1909) by Mikhail Fokine (Jowitt, 1992:105). Like Kirstein, Hanna (1988:32) also describes ballet choreographers’ interest in other cultural forms to develop new and innovative works, and found that “moreover, people often look to other cultures, past and present, to enhance their palette of experience. This is especially the case in Western culture where innovation prevails as an aesthetic canon”. Although Indian dance is one of the oldest known dance forms in the world, themes adapted from it and other ancient forms inspired ‘exotic’ content in nineteenth-century ballet repertoire. The focus on the ancient Egyptian aesthetic in ballet will be explored next.

1.3 The African (Egyptian) and European (Greek) aesthetic connection

The aim of this section is to highlight possible links between ballet and the African (Egyptian) aesthetic, which may have inspired early European culture through Greece, thus influencing the aesthetics of the ballet form. Greskovic (1998:3) notes: “Greek dances reveal links with civilizations on Crete, possibly transferred from Egypt, dating between 3000 and 1400 B.C”. Many dance scholars highlight the same starting point: for example, Clarke and Crisp (1973) and Lawson (1976) documented the origins of ballet’s European history as beginning in Greece. Other dance scholars have documented that the history of ballet may have begun later, placing its origins in Italy (Guest, 1984; Homans, 2010). Research shows that there

was in fact a concept of aesthetics in ancient Egypt, and its contribution to aesthetic theory is important. Historians Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, Jean Harrell, Cyril Barrett and Danuta Petsch (2006:8) note that history

does not deny that outside Europe, to the East, and particularly in Egypt, there probably existed not only implicit, but also an explicitly stated aesthetics. [...] Although the present history does not include non-European aesthetics, it nevertheless draws attention to the relationship and the interdependence between non-European and European aesthetics.

Whilst some historians acknowledge the ancient Egyptians' influence on European aesthetics, others have not yet incorporated any 'non-European' aesthetic influences, which is especially concerning as regards present-day dance history.

There is a great deal of scholarly debate as to whether Egypt greatly influenced Greek culture, though historian Martin Bernal (1991) dedicated three volumes of books, entitled The Black Athena, to the subject, with reference to African and in particular Egyptian influences on ancient Greek culture. Cultural theorist Paul Gilroy (1995:60) acknowledges Bernal's work and offers his analysis:

The enduring symbol that Egypt supplies for black creativity and civilisation, has had a special significance within black Atlantic response to modernity. [...] It helped to ground the cultural norms of diaspora politics outside the pathway marked out by the West's own progress from barbarism to civilisation and to show that the path began in Africa rather than Greece. Egypt also provided the symbolic means to locate the diaspora's critique of Enlightenment universals outside the philosophical repertoire of the West.

Gilroy's comment implies that modern civilisation started in Egypt, rather than the usual assumption that Greece was the fulcrum for the modern Western world.

Before analysing these influences, it is first necessary to briefly explain the concept of aesthetics. The origin of the word 'aesthetics' derives from the Greek 'aisthetikos', which means "sense perception" (Kaepler, 2003:153). Cultural studies scholar Malcolm Barnard (1998:16) describes the word as meaning "anything that is produced or created with the intention of being perceived visually". The discipline of aesthetics began in Europe during the late nineteenth century, and was a "concept inherited from idealist philosophy, referring to principles of taste, especially good taste, and hence of beauty. [...] Aesthetics was captured by the discourse of 'art for art's sake', becoming associated with the 'refined' appreciation of beauty in the arts" (O'Sullivan; Hartley; Saunders; Montgomery; Fiske, 1994:6-7).

Ancient Egyptian dances were passed down through generations and they were also influenced by other cultures that visited or invaded Egypt. For example, the ancient Greek philosopher Plato studied geometry and astronomy in Egypt, and was also culturally influenced by its dance. According to dance scholar Jennifer Neville, “with the great precedent of Egypt always in mind, Plato hoped to reform and permanently stabilize the Greek psyche and body politic through censored education in music and dance – but in a novel mode” (2008:278). Plato was motivated to educate the Greeks through the therapeutic nature of dance, body and soul, which was also a concept inspired by ancient Egyptian culture (Fraleigh, 1995:10). The fifteenth century was also known as the Italian Renaissance, during which new creative ideas and scientific developments proliferated. Lee (2002:26) also notes that “Renaissance architecture, sculpture, and painting had an enormous impact on shaping the advancement of Western civilization”. It is important to note that there was also a revival of Egyptian sculpture during the period Lee describes, and historian James Steven Curl (2005:434-435) points out its influence on architecture before and during the Renaissance:

After Egypt became part of the Roman Empire and Egyptian deities (especially the goddess *Isis* and her consort *Osiris* [whom the Greeks and Romans called *Serapis* or *Sarapis*]) were venerated by the Romans, the process accelerated: not only were many Egyptian artefacts, including obelisks, brought to Rome and re-erected there, but countless objects in the Egyptian style were made in Europe. Ancient obelisks were again set up in Renaissance Rome, where they may be seen in various locations today, and huge numbers of Egyptian and Egyptianising artefacts re-emerged to grace the collections in the Vatican and elsewhere. During the latter half of the eighteenth century, Egyptian motifs began to intrigue designers in the West.

The cultural influence of Egyptian art during the Italian renaissance provides an insight into the enriched, diverse environment of this period, which is also an era that dance scholars frequently refer to in terms of Greek and Roman sculpture's influence on ballet (Adair, 1992:83; Kirstein, 1984:29; Lee, 2002:27). Lee (2002:3) notes: “The Romans looked upon Greece and its colonies in Italy as bearers of civilization, greatly admiring its art and science. The Greek glorification of humanity as reflected in its civic philosophy, architecture, and sculpture was partially appreciated by the Romans”. Lee's comment also emphasises the links between the Romans and Greeks and their shared appreciation of art.

Eighteenth-century ballet was also influenced by “themes from Greek and Roman mythology that symbolically and allegorically related to the particular occasion for a production” (Lee, 2002:83). Bernal (1991:63-83) believed the ancient Greeks were particularly influenced by ancient Egyptian mythology, and therefore this likely also influenced ballet. For example, George Balanchine’s ballets Apollo (1928) and Orpheus (1948) were inspired by Greek mythology (Scholl, 1994:73). Similarly, those ballets were also associated with ancient Egyptian mythology. Bernal’s (1991:71) research found that:

The name Orpheus would seem to come from the Egyptian form (‘l)rp’t (Hereditary Prince), which was transcribed in Greek as Orpais. (‘l)rp’t was a title given to the Egyptian god commonly known as Geb: the latter was a deity of the good earth – both the flora and fauna that covered it – and the Underworld.

Although most contemporary research suggests that ballet’s origins and aesthetics were established from European culture, this brief section has shown that ancient Egyptian culture is acknowledged by many scholars as a significant influence on the Greeks. Therefore, this suggests that elements of ballet were also influenced by Egyptian aesthetics.

1.3.1 Summary of non-European connections

The origins of ballet are very important: whilst the earliest forms of dance were found in India, research has also charted the migration of some dance forms in the European repertoire from India and Egypt, in North Africa. Brief examples of these cultural influences are evident in the themes of works such as La Bayadère, Cleopatra (Egyptian Nights); Schéhérazade (1910), Thousand and One Nights; and Le Dieu Bleu. The French were inspired by the power and splendour of the gods in Egyptian, Greek and Roman mythology, and this is especially evident in king Louis XIV’s self-styled embodiment of the ‘sun king’. Egyptian sculpture also inspired the Greeks and Romans (Wilson, 1956:311; Galinsky, 1992:123; Curl, 2005: 434-435). It is vital to acknowledge the aesthetic influences and adapted themes from non-European cultures in the ballet repertoire from India and ancient Egypt and to recognise how these diverse inspirations have contributed to the evolution of the genre. Historical evidence has shown that art from ancient Egypt has had an impact on European cultures and should therefore also be acknowledged as a contributor to ballet as an art form. Consequently, it can be argued that future consideration of the origins of ballet

should have a more inclusive history that acknowledges the fusion of non-European influences. Dance scholar Lesley-Anne Sayers (1993:178) further supports this view: “The values and ideologies that make up dance aesthetics and appreciation have a history not just in terms of dance; ways of viewing draw on complex cultural and social contexts”. Although a brief historical overview was presented in this chapter, further research is still needed to fully define these North African and European connections.

1.4 Ballet aesthetics and whiteness

This section explores the aesthetics that have influenced ballet through documented sources. Ballet's association with the royal courts enabled dance to become established as an art form, especially once King Louis XIV institutionalised ballet in 1661. Greek and Roman sculpture has often been identified by dance scholars as a source of inspiration and creativity, and its principles of aesthetic beauty have inspired “the ideal human form” (Adair, 1992:83) in ballet. As discussed above, Lee (2002:27) reiterates that Renaissance artists were influenced by “themes recovered from Greek and Roman mythology. The ancient buildings and statues served as blueprints of the fifteenth century's bold interpretation of human experience, which it reflected in its own architectural design”. Kirstein (1984:29) also highlights the artistic insights of these cultures and identifies the ‘ideal human forms’ for which “dancing masters for court ballets until the eighteenth century had an abstract ideal of plastic perfection: late Greek or Roman sculpture”. Nevertheless, it is important to note that many of the early classical sculptures were nudes, unlike the typically clothed Egyptian statues (Hurwit, 1987:194).

The artistic influence of Greek and Roman sculpture sometimes resulted in images that encapsulated ‘godliness’. This is also linked to European rulers attributing dominance and authority to representations of ‘whiteness’. King Louis XIV's vision of authority recalls this portrayal of godliness, since he was inspired by mythology and ancient Egyptian ideals of transcendence and purity. In ancient Egypt, the concept of purity relates to the

care of the body [which] was in part a reflection of their concepts about the physical body being a permanent repository for the separate incorporeal elements which

constituted an individual's potential immortality. It was necessary to take good care of the body, for it would be the home of one's spirit for eternity. (Montserrat, 1996:28)

The notion of purity in an Egyptian context was based on a preoccupation with health, spirituality and empowerment, whilst some of the European concepts were founded on notion of transcendence and whiteness, with reference to godliness, beauty and power. Cultural studies scholar Richard Dyer (1997:70-71) investigates the European perspective and explains that “emphasis on purity, cleanliness, virginity [...] the superiority of whiteness has been felt in terms of beauty as well as morality. [...] White people's whiteness enables them to inhabit without visual contradiction the highest point in the Enlightenment's understanding of human development”. The concept of ‘godliness’ in art inspired ballet practitioners to produce works based on these ideologies. Dance scholar Jane Desmond (1998:122) describes how “one of ballet's charms is the overttness with which it propagates socially charged imagery as a form of the beautiful”. Therefore, to sustain the characteristic of ‘whiteness’ in ballet with reference to ‘godliness’ and ‘purity’, this concept was heightened by choreographers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who themed most of their dances on classical mythology, as mentioned above. As in the example above, the Ballet de la nuit (1653) was performed by Louis XIV as the sun king (Lee, 2002:68; Bernal 1991:177), who was inspired by ancient Egyptian rulers and mythological gods to become a powerful ruler. These ideas led to his desire to portray and represent himself as ‘godly’, and these ideas later became related to Eurocentric visions of ‘whiteness’.

In the early to mid-nineteenth century, also known as the Romantic ballet era and a period that saw the rise of classical ballet, artists were open to new ideas, ballet was transformed, and choreographers were inspired to create innovative works about the supernatural or the ‘exotic’, which included Eastern countries (Guest, 1984:35). Supernatural repertoire during this era involved the portrayal of a particular type of femininity and favoured the representation of a ‘pure’, virginal ballerina. Popular ballets at that time were La Sylphide (1832) and Giselle (1841); these works all portrayed floating supernatural spirits or dancing fairies known as sylphs. “The sylph(ide) became dominantly feminine, a symbol of lightness, who conquered air and space, and gained freedom from the tyranny of the down-to-earth;

she was a metaphor of evanescence, transparency, floating, the essence of ballet as an ideal concept” (Kirsten, 1984:146). Swedish/Italian ballerina Marie Taglioni was one of the most prominent dancers to portray and perform the image of the sylph in La Sylphide (1832). With ground-breaking technical dancing skills, she is often credited as the first dancer to perform *en pointe*, emphasising the weightlessness of movement in her shortened bell-shaped skirt, as taught by her father and choreographer Filippo Taglioni (Adair 1992:96; Guest, 1984:33-35). Her dancing merits were described as ‘virginal’ (Adair, 1992:72). As Dyer mentioned previously, these were aesthetic ideals of beauty. Dance scholar Alexandra Kolb (2009:56) found that “Taglioni represented the ethereal heroine of the ‘white ballet’”. She refers to dance critic Théophile Gautier, whose reviews commend “the ‘virginal’ and ‘Christian’ innocent *femme fragile*”. Some of the aesthetic principles of ballet are clearly defined through her dancing and replicating images of ‘godliness’, which are embodied in the representation of ‘purity’ and ‘whiteness’ in the female body, thus portraying an image of beauty.

Dance scholar Lynn Garafola describes nineteenth-century Romantic ballets and highlights the concept of ‘whiteness’ in ballet, explaining that “the *ballet blanc* – the ballerina in virginal white replicated en masse by the ensemble [...] was conceived in classical style, that is, in the international – or supranational – lexicon of the dance d’école” (1997:4). *Ballet blanc* embraced whiteness on two levels: first, these ballets included the theatrical element of supernatural/ghostly imitations and the ballerinas were dressed in white tutus to enhance these effects. Second, the embodiment of whiteness emphasised the purity and godliness of feminine beauty, as described above. This is illustrated, for example, in La Sylphide (1832), a love story between a supernatural sylph and an earthbound male (Kirsten, 1984:146).

Dyer’s (1997:71) research highlights that “white people have long considered themselves the most beautiful of people, especially white women. The gallant term for women in general, ‘the fair sex’, has a distinct skin colour suggestion”. The concept of the ‘fair sex’ in relation to the aesthetics of beauty is still prevalent in many cultures, especially in certain post-colonial communities where some women bleach or lighten their skin to appear more beautiful.

Cultural studies scholar Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban (2005:56) points to the influence of post-colonialism and proposes that “bleaching has been popular in each of the cultures where white standards of beauty have negatively affected black minority or majority cultures, including the United States, South Africa, or places of white colonialism, like Kenya, the Bahamas, and other Caribbean nations”. Post-colonial communities are influenced by the desire to adopt the appearance of whiteness, which is historically ingrained within the sub-consciousness of most individuals, and consequently the white aesthetic of beauty remains dominant. It is therefore ironic that one of the world’s most acclaimed paragons of beauty was Egypt’s black (and last) pharaoh Cleopatra VII, who ruled from 51 BC–30 BC. She had a relationship with the Roman general Mark Antony and had three children with him (Green Mac Donald, 2002:21-44). Dyer (1997:72) comments on her exemplification: “The representations of Cleopatra provides one of the clearest instances of the conviction that whiteness is the pinnacle of human beauty. Cleopatra became a byword for feminine beauty in European culture, but in the process she had to be represented as white”. The ancient Egyptians were fascinated with “embodying an aesthetic concept of feminine beauty” (Robins, 2008:252) and Cleopatra’s European portrayal as white is an early example of denial of African/black beauty.

To summarise, aesthetics in ballet became associated with an appreciation for art and beauty during the Italian Renaissance, which in turn was influenced by ancient Greek and Roman sculpture, with a particular interest in images of the ‘ideal human form’. Many dance scholars believe that that the ballet aesthetic is a combination of art, beauty and dance. The aesthetic influence of ancient Egyptian art and beauty is similarly evident in Greek and European culture, and consequently ancient Egyptians’ aesthetic contribution can be argued to have created a gateway to European aesthetics. Nevertheless, do the historical aesthetics of ballet and whiteness still exist when directors cast black dancers for traditional roles? These ideas will be explored throughout this thesis.

1.5 The changing artistic 'aesthetic' form and the ballet body

The origins of aesthetics in ballet are important to explore with reference to how the ideal ballet dancer's body was conceived and developed over time. As discussed earlier, aesthetics in ballet were not created based on only one heritage, but were inspired by the early art forms, especially sculpture, of the Greek and Italian renaissance. These artistic traditions have influenced the representation of the body in ballet. In order to evaluate what transformations have occurred to create this ideal body form, a brief examination of the representation of bodies in ballet is necessary to contextualise those perspectives and establish how the current 'ballet body' became standardised for both male and female dancers. For example, to become a professional ballet dancer one requires a short torso and long legs. These requirements were influenced by and made fashionable by George Balanchine during the 1930s (Jowitt, 1992:264). Dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster describes how the ballet dancer's body is achieved: "success in this technique depends in part on thin, long limbs capable of displaying the formal geometric features of the tradition [...] The ideal body – light, quick, precise, strong – designates the linear shapes, the rhythm of phases" (Foster, 1997:241). It is important to note that whilst the ideal body Foster describes does not mention the ethnicity of the dancer, the whiteness of these bodies may well have been assumed.

1.6 Ballet and the establishment of gender roles

The concept of the ideal body and aesthetic beauty, as mentioned earlier (Adair, 1992:83; Kirstein, 1984:29 and Lee, 2002:27), was inspired by Greek and Roman white, naked marble sculpture. Adair's research established that the dominance of a patriarchal society in ancient history gave prominence to the male body and influenced the ballet aesthetic: she explains that in "the Classical Greek and the early Italian Renaissance, the male body was of crucial importance. At both times, there was a curiosity about the make-up of the human body and

the belief of man as god and central to the world” (Adair 1992:37). These ideas were similar to those of the ancient Egyptians.²

In the sixteenth-century European courts, nobles aimed to create an elegant posture inspired by ancient sculpture and “the notion of *display* itself became endemic to the ballet style, so that a well turned-out body in both senses, was valued” (Adair 1992:84). After centuries of ballet being performed in the courts, it became more recognised as a professional art form once King Louis XIV established his institution. Ballet was not only performed in the courts: Lee notes that the nobles of his King Louis XIV’s army also performed ballet as a form of exercise. “The physical exercise of dancing benefited the physical requirements needed in battle as they benefited the grace and well-being of an aristocratic performer” (Lee, 2002:68). Whilst ballet became a part of military routine, a field dominated by men, it is not surprising that men also dominated the stage from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, and even performed women’s roles ‘*en travesti*’ (Clarke and Crisp, 1973:44). Greskovic explains that during the seventeenth century there was a ‘class’ transformation from nobles to ‘non-nobles’ performing ballet, and like Clarke and Crisp, he discusses the roles that men performed and establishes that “for a while, French theatrical spectacles were performed by all men participants; the use of masks and travesty costuming aided the transformation of young male dancers into the variously required female characters” (Greskovic, 2005:13). Women did not perform on the stage until the seventeenth century because it was not allowed by the Christian church (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:455). English language and literary scholar Peter Stoneley (2006:11) also comments on the emergence of women’s roles at this time:

As the ballet professionalised, boys were often cast in women’s roles, though towards the end of the seventeenth century, women too began to be cast. But the restrictive costumes worn by women meant that the man performed the more skilful and varied movements. He remained the central and most admired performer.

² Egyptologist Dominic Monserrat research notes the importance of the male body in ancient times. He found: There can be little doubt that in antiquity, the male body provided an important symbolic gauge of discourse about power, identity and social position [...]. The male body was a surface upon which power relations were mapped, and which could be exploded as a forum for the display of these dynamics. According to ancient physiology, the unmarked, unspecified and unqualified human body was male, providing the yardstick by which other kinds of bodies were measured and defined.

(Montserrat, 1999:153)

It is evident that the representation of the male body was perceived to be dominant and powerful, as identified earlier.

Adair also refers to gender roles in ballet: “It is not surprising therefore that men dominated the stage in the eighteenth century, not only because of tradition and patriarchal ideology, which gave them power and kept women in subordinate roles, but also because their clothes allowed a far greater range of movement” (Adair, 1992:84). The early foundation of the ballet world was a patriarchal environment: men dominated roles on the stage and controlled all aspects of the production; they were the directors, ballet masters, choreographers, composers and set designers. Gender roles on stage have changed over time in response to developing attitudes within society. Dance scholar Carol Brown also discusses these concepts: “as signifying systems, representations carry with them sets of values and attributes which are embedded in particular ideologies and are, therefore, capable of creating, endorsing or subverting ideas about gender” (Brown 1994: 204). Brown highlights various ideologies that have influenced and changed gender roles in ballet. The next section examines the representation of the male role in nineteenth-century ballet, and describes how male dancers ‘faded out’ to make room for the graceful, virginal female ballet dancer.

1.7 Representations of male ballet dancers

During the nineteenth century, the Romantic era, the ballerina came to take centre stage (Adair, 1992:92). Stoneley (2006:11) notes that it “was only in the nineteenth century, with the extensive use of point-work in Romantic ballets, and the advent of the bourgeois audience, that displaced men”. Ballerinas were admired for their talent, beauty and grace, whilst the male dancers started to take a supporting role, lifting and assisting the ballerina around the stage (Lee, 2002:144; Kolb, 2009:52). Stoneley (2006:10) refers to Théophile Gautier (1811–1872), a French art critic and poet during the nineteenth century who was passionate about ballet, although his opinion of the male dancer in 1840 was one of distaste. Other critics like French writer Jules Janin (1804–1874) and later Russian writer André Levinson (1887–1933) held similar ideas to Gautier, that the male’s position in ballet was in decline. Musicologist Marian Smith (2007:33) explored these critics’ views to find:

The notion of studying the nineteenth-century danseur is problematic because of an anti-male strain in dance historiography that has led some to suggest that he virtually disappeared from the stage. André Levinson is largely responsible for the danseur’s poor reputation: he minimised the narrative aspect of nineteenth-century ballet and declared in 1929 that the ballerina Marie Taglioni had ‘evicted’ men from the stage.

Levinson also canonised *La Sylphide* (1831), a ballet that he like his nineteenth-century predecessors Théophile Gautier and Jules Janin, gendered as feminine. He promulgated the term 'ballet blanc', a feminising but misleading term now in common use and rarely interrogated. And yet men danced on the stage throughout the nineteenth-century.

The change in attitudes towards men performing ballet was encouraged by writers like Janin, Gautier and Levinson, who popularised these opinions through their journalistic endeavours, and ultimately led to the demise of the male dancer. Stoneley (2006:8-9) describes the gender roles portrayed by dancers' bodies on stage:

At various points since the early nineteenth century, ballet has been a scandal about the body. It has been a prime occasion to see attractive young women in short or more or less see-through garments. It has also given offence from time to time because it presents a relatively undressed male body. It offers young men as objects of contemplation, surrendered to the viewer's gaze.

The male dancer would strive once again towards centre stage to become equal to the ballerina. Through the representation of iconic dancers like the Polish dancer Vaslav Nijinsky, a brief evaluation of key male dancers and body types throughout ballet history will be examined.

1.7.1 Male dancers, bodies and roles

The aim of this section is to examine male body types and the roles in which they are cast, especially in traditional ballets. This will be illustrated using examples of key dancers that have fit each criteria. For traditional ballet roles, the male dancer is often categorised by height and build, and will accordingly be cast by the artistic director of the company, although this is not necessarily the case in modern ballets where the choreographer may choose dancers based on their requirements for the repertoire. Examples of key principal male dancers in ballet history that are known for their athleticism and grace include Vaslav Nijinsky (Polish, 1889–1950); Eric Bruhn (Danish, 1928–1986); Rudolf Nureyev (Soviet, 1938–1993); Antony Dowell (British, 1943–); Irek Muhamedov (Soviet, 1960–) and Carlos Acosta (Cuban, 1973–).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the founder and artistic director of the Ballet Russes (1909–1929) Serge Diaghilev created new possibilities for the male dancer in ballet. Garafola (2005:179) documents this period and explains that the male dancer was

no longer merely a consort to the ballerina or the exponent of a chivalric ideal of masculinity, he was a protagonist in his own right, projecting an image of sexual heterodoxy that left a deep imprint not only on the ballets of the Diaghilev period, but also on its audiences. [...] Diaghilev's heroes traced a spectrum of male roles that transcended conventions of gender while presenting the male body in a way that was frankly erotic. Ballet after ballet celebrated its physique, dramatized its athletic prowess, and paraded its sexual availability.

Garafola's comments highlight how Diaghilev began to sexualise the male dancer and create an alternate stage for 'erotic' art, in contrast to the representations of 'virginal' ballerinas of the Romanic era (Banes, 1998:12). It is ironic to note that Diaghilev brought eroticism to the stage, as it was fashionable at the time (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:43), since evolutionist scholars normally associated the erotic with 'primitive' culture, especially when performed by people from the African diaspora. These ideas will be explored in the following chapter.

Principal dancer Vaslav Nijinsky (1889–1950) became Diaghilev's first success in creating this new image for male dancers. From 1909 to 1919 Nijinsky worked on and off with the company, setting the standards for becoming a pioneer in ballet history. It is important to note that he was described as 'other' because of his "allegedly 'Mongolian' features – high cheekbones, and in particular his slanted, almond-shaped eyes emphasised by many Western artists. [...] this Orientalisation of Nijinsky's eyes point to how his physical features were construed as proof of presupposed racial difference" (Järvinen, 2014:141). The description of Nijinsky's facial features as 'other' is further evidence of the racialised classifications by scientists and evolutionists at the time, and these perspectives will be further explored in the following chapter. Dance scholar Jennifer Homans (2010:307) describes his physique: "Nijinsky had an unusual body: he was just five feet four inches in height, and had a long, thick neck, and narrow, femininely sloping shoulders, muscular arms (he lifted weights), and a slim, elongated torso. His legs were short and bulky and he had massive, grasshopper like thighs". Though Nijinsky did perform the noble principle roles, his body did not conform to Greskovic's (2005:162) requirements of being tall or long-limbed. However, he possessed an athletic body and radiated eroticism, especially when performing L'après-midi d'un faune (1912) – this ballet will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Greskovic explains the diverse range of male dancers and how they are cast according to

height and body structure, and categorised as short, middle-range, or tall and long-limbed.

Starting with the shortest, he describes this dancer's body type:

[...] due to a thickness of limb, would be the grotesque, rustic, or comic dancer. In story ballet traditions these are the acrobatic jesters or buffoons; in non-story ballets, the eye-catching, athletic solo roles. [...] By the book of tradition, such male dancer designations remain in ballet to lesser and greater degrees depending on artistic directors' tastes in general and dictates in particular. (Greskovic, 2005:162)

An example of a dancer whose body structure and height fits Greskovic's description of a short male dancer is former Royal Ballet British principal dancer Wayne Sleep (1948–) at 5 ft. 2 in. (1.57m). He was known as an excellent virtuoso dancer; nevertheless "his whole ballet career was confined to supporting roles such as Puck in *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, Blue Bird in *The Sleeping Beauty* and the *Mandolin Dance*" (Taylor, 2014 online). Dance critics Debra Craine and Judith Mackrell (2010:413) also note that although he was "too short for the standard Prince roles, his virtuoso technique made him outstanding in demi-caractère roles." Greskovic (2005:162) goes on to describe middle-range dancers, whose

stature and proportion of limbs suggest brighter "color" of movement activity and personality or character. The prince's friends, for example, or solo roles less consistently coupled with a female dancer counterpart. If the grand or "serious" genre calls forth the personification of Apollo, the *demi-caractère* suggests the figure, statue, and fleetness of Mercury, the gods' favourite messenger.

A middle-range dancer that matches this profile is the 5 ft. 7 in. Soviet dancer, Mikhail Baryshnikov (1948–). He studied at the Leningrad Ballet School and then joined the Kirov ballet in 1967. Whilst touring in 1974 with the company in Toronto, Canada he defected from the Soviet Union (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:48). From 1974 to the late 1980s he performed with many companies like the Royal Ballet, the Paris Opera Ballet and the American Ballet Theatre, where he was a principal dancer, and also worked with modern dance companies like Paul Taylor, Alvin Ailey and Martha Graham (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:48). He is described as follows: "at five feet seven inches tall, [he] was on the short side for a premiere danseur, [...] his physique was nearly perfect, his stunning technical ability and confident, masterful style. With large, muscular legs Baryshnikov could leap high and land silently, appearing to glide through the air" (Rinaldi, 2010:72). Craine and Mackrell (2010:48) note that "as a pure classical dancer, [he possessed] musicality as well as an exceptional ability to inhabit the characters he portrayed on stage". The description of Baryshnikov performing

character roles are similar to Greskovic's description of a middle-range dancer.

In Greskovic's final type of male dancer, "tall and long-limbed physiques traditionally indicate the grave and ultimately noble dance character. This manifests itself in classic story ballets with princely roles, and non-narrative, classical showpiece works for cavalier roles-escort/partner to the ballerina" (Greskovic, 2005:162). In contrast to the male dancers mentioned above, who are all white European, an example from the twenty-first century is Carlos Acosta, a 6-ft. tall Afro-Cuban former principal dancer of the Royal Ballet, who can be considered a 'noble dancer' with his strong athletic body. In 1983, Acosta trained at the National Ballet School of Cuba. He has worked as a principal dancer with the English National Ballet in 1991, the National Ballet of Cuba, Houston Ballet and the Royal Ballet from 1998 to 2016, becoming a guest artist. Craine and Mackrell (2010:2) comment on his talents: "A classic product of Cuban training, with exceptional elevation, virtuoso pirouette technique, and an insouciant onstage charm Acosta rapidly became one of his generation's busiest and most popular male dancers, guesting with companies around the world". Male dancers in ballet are defined by their height to fit the required roles in traditional ballets; however, the main requirements for becoming a dancer are technique and strength, which all of the above examples certainly seem to possess. Diaghilev's concepts eroticised the male dancer and the ballet repertoire, and his influence is still alive today. Although many dancers are white, the media continue to sexualise black artists like Acosta. Further accounts of the sexual representation of black male dancers in ballet will be explored throughout this thesis.

1.8 Female dancers' bodies

The aim of this section is to identify whether there is an 'ideal' female dancers' body, by using key examples. The concept of the 'ideal' body has historically focused on the aesthetic perception of the female dancer rather than the male. Brown (1994: 204) explains that the "representation of the female body depends on the set of rules, codes and conventions which are specific to a genre and period of dance, and in turn, are related to prevailing beliefs and ideologies within the wider context of society". Therefore, the 'ideal' dancers' form changes according to society's values and aesthetic perceptions of the female body.

Some of the ballerinas of the Romanic era who reflected these aesthetic principles were “Marie Taglioni (1804–1884), Fanny Elssler (1810–1884), Fanny Cerrito (1817–1909), and Lucile Grahn (1819–1907)” (Stoneley, 2006:11). An example of a ballet dancer’s body was discussed by dance scholar Anne Cooper Albright, who cites Gautier’s description of Italian ballerina Fanny Cerrito’s physique:

Cerrito is blonde, with very gentle and tender blue eyes [...] Her shoulders and bust have nothing of that skinniness that is usually the mark of a ballerina, whose entire substance seems to have sunk into the legs. Her rounded, well-covered arms do not offend the eye with sorry anatomical details, but unfold gracefully and with suppleness. Her charming figure gives no hint of the fatigue of the studio or the sweat of training [...] Her feet are small and well arched, her ankles slender, and her legs shapely [...] In short, she is young and attractive, and makes a good impression.

(Gautier in Cooper Albright, 1997:13)

Gautier highlights an example of what he considered a great ballerina, by describing Cerrito’s body and movements. Whilst there are outlined requirements for becoming a ballet dancer, as described by Foster (1997:241) earlier, what makes a great female dancer is technical ability and lyricism. Adair’s research discovered that Taglioni did not, in fact, possess the ideal dancer’s body, but she was able to execute the required techniques to perform ballet (1992:96-97). Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova’s (1881–1931) “slender body, despite its preternatural fluency and expressiveness, was disparagingly reviewed in the early years of her career” (Aloff, 2006:6).

The physical form of a ballerina performing classical repertoire at the time did vary, including dancers with short legs or long torsos, as represented by the shape of early dancers “of the classical Russian ballerinas from [Anna] Pavlova to [Maya] Plisetskaya” (Gottschild, 1998:65). Whilst there are many famous ballerinas who have the technique, ability, lyricism and slender limbs, it was the founder of the New York City Ballet George Balanchine (1904–1983) who would change perceptions of the ballet dancer’s body: this will be further examined below.

1.8.1 The representation of female ballet dancers in Britain

There are many value systems that have affected how dance may be perceived within society (Dodds, 2011: 27-28). The historical representation of female ballet dancers in Britain

will now be explored to examine how they elevated the form to a 'high art' status. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, ballet did not always hold 'high art' status in Britain. Garafola (2005:222) explains that in London "no 'high art' institution existed for ballet, and the academies that offered classical training typically channelled their students into pantomimes and other forms of popular entertainment in venues where many teachers doubled as ballet masters". According to Garafola (2005), ballet had not established any 'high art' institutions during this time, which implies that it had a 'low art' status. Reinforcing Garafola's point, dance scholar Beth Genné (2000:136) highlights the perception of ballet as a low art form and explains that "'toe dancing', was associated in the minds of the public with the loose morals and the popular light entertainment of the turn of the century Empire and Alhambra Ballets – ballet to titillate the tired businessman". Whilst ballet was performed at the Empire and Alhambra Leicester Square music halls, Genné illustrates how the representations of female dancers during this period were sexualised as objects of male desire. This led to the profession of female dancer having a lower status, which further devalued the image of ballet.

Dance scholar Alexandra Carter had similar findings to Genné's research on this period, although the representations of the female dancer in her studies depict an alternative to the stereotypical 'low profiled' image of the ballerina, who became transformed into a 'high art' status celebrity icon. Carter (2005:12-13) comments:

The roles of women in the ballet included the stereotypes of the 'girl next door', the spirit/seductress and the malevolent avenger. Off-stage, dancers were perceived with similar ambivalence and the ballet itself regarded as both a high art form peopled by stars of impeccable virtue and a rather dubious activity for young women searching for a wealthy patron.

It can be argued the sexualisation and stereotyping of female dancers on and off the stage during this period was instigated by a patriarchal society, which undervalued ballet as a genre. On the other hand, female dancers reinstated ballet as a 'high art' form to work in because of their 'celebrity' status. Carter (2005:123) explains: "The generally anodyne roles of the ballerina and the technically correct but passionless nature of her performances would have also served to construct a morally pure image. As such, she could be placed on a pedestal together with the rest of idealised womanhood".

Appreciation for the artistic talents of the female dancer in ballet changed during the 1930s when, according to Genné (2000:134), the Royal Ballet Company's director Dame Ninette de Valois³ produced 'institutionalised canons' known as 'classic' repertoire from the nineteenth-century ballets such as Swan Lake (1895), Sleeping Beauty (1890), Giselle (1841), Coppélia (1870) and The Nutcracker (1892). The classic Romantic style nineteenth-century ballets, like Giselle and Swan Lake, known as 'ballet blanc' or 'white ballets' as discussed above, portrayed 'whiteness' and the purity and virginal femininity of ballet dancers, theatricalised through supernatural themes. Dance scholar Evan Alderson (1997:128) notes:

Pervaded by a romantic ideal of femininity, ballet has played a part in promulgating its wider social acceptance. The romantic style and its immediate heirs continue to be highly visible in ballet production [...] Perhaps the imagery of *ballet blanc* has such staying power because it has entered a discourse of the body. Dance, after all, is an art that depends upon the entrenchment of its conventional imagery in living bodies.

It is ironic to note that, although de Valois could introduce 'ballet blanc' classics into British ballet and to encourage society to appreciate this art form as 'high art', ballet's success was partly to the detriment of female dancers who performed virginal character roles, since these were also seen to 'sexualise' and stereotype the artists. The question arises: do traditional

³ Irish dancer Dame Ninette de Valois, born Edris Stannus (1898–2001), trained with all the prominent ballet teachers of the time in London, including "Lila Field, Édouard Espinosa and Cecchetti [...], later with Nikolai Legat" (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:464). – an impressive list that emphasises her dance heritage. She was a principal dancer for Léonide Massine-Lydia Lopokova and was part of the Ballets Russes from 1923 until 1925 (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:464). De Valois founded the Royal Ballet School, which was originally known as the Academy of Choreographic Art in 1926. She met Lillian Baylis (1874–1937), the theatre manager and producer of the Old Vic Theatre in London, who offered to "stage dances for the plays and operas she was presenting" (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:51). They were both motivated to form a new school and ballet company. Baylis found the Sadler's Wells Theatre premises in 1931, where they established the school. The company renamed the organisation The Vic-Wells Ballet School, and dancers who had trained and graduated from the school joined The Vic-Wells Ballet Company (Royal Ballet School History, 2015 online). The organisation went through further name changes in 1939, and the new establishments were renamed The Sadler's Wells School and The Sadler's Wells Ballet. The ballet company relocated to the Royal Opera House in 1946 and a new ballet company, The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, was established.

A year later, the school relocated to Barons Court and statutory education was introduced. The institutions changed names once again in 1956 due to a Royal Charter given by the Queen, which was the highest recognition of standards in Britain, and they received new endorsed company names: The Royal Ballet School, The Royal Ballet and The Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet, which would become known as the Birmingham Royal Ballet in 1990. The Royal Charter enabled the institution to become renowned as the foremost ballet organisation in Britain, thus receiving government support from establishments such as the Arts Council of England (ACE), which was founded in 1945 "to preserve and improve standards of performance in the various arts" (Chilvers, [1990] 2009:28). The ACE received a Royal Charter the following year in 1946 and served the whole of the United Kingdom until 1994 when it was separated into:

Arts Council of England (now Arts Council England), the Scottish Arts Council, the Arts Council of Wales and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The Arts Councils, dedicated to the promotion of the arts, are non-departmental public bodies; that is, although they are in receipt of public money, they are not an integral part of a government department and carry out their work with a degree of independence.

(Grau, 2008:247)

The teaching style of the school is said to reflect de Valois' experience, and its current aim is "to produce dancers with a strong, clean classical technique with great emphasis on artistry, musicality, purity of line, co-ordination and a quality of movement, free of mannerisms" (RBS System of Training, 2015 online).

roles for female dancers in romantic ballets/'ballet blanc' devalue the representation of women in this profession within a modern society that strives for gender equality, hence lessening the status of ballet as an art form? Alderson (1997:128) comments:

The "dancer for women" images woman as both cynosure of eyes and epitome of virtue, but both beauty and purity depend upon sexuality refined to the vanishing point. She presents a demure, perfected, admired body which projects disembodiment. And she is also a dancer for men – men whose attraction of the flesh both sentimentalizes sexual possession and spares them full acknowledgement of a sexuality they cannot control.

The value and representation of female dancers in traditional ballets are an issue for debate; nevertheless, the art form may be bound to performing traditional ballets for financial gain. As De Valois proved, the classics not only added value and status to the art form, but also brought audiences to the theatre. If the sexualisation of female dancers in 'ballet classics' have led audiences to enjoy the art form, then the 'traditional' representation of the female dancer may have become less important and therefore still remained an artistic 'fantasy' within the 'covert' and 'overt' sexual subtext of its repertoire.

1.9 The Balanchine body

Dance scholars have documented two different perspectives of what Balanchine required for his company's perfect dancer's body shape. In the first instance, he was inspired as a student in St. Petersburg by Russian prima ballerina Elizaveta Gerdz's slim body: "he wanted speed, flexibility, long lines. [...] women are not all extremely tall and thin with long legs, a short torso, a long neck" (Jowitt, 1992:264). The second perceptive has been noted by dance scholars Banes, Dixon Gottschild and Genné, who suggest that Balanchine was inspired by the black body, especially African American Josephine Baker, with whom he worked in Paris in the 1920s (Kant, 2007:227). More about his work with black dancers will be discussed in the following chapters. Dance scholar Jennifer Fisher cites Genné's (2005:50) work and states that Baker's musicality and adventurous spirit, along with her long legs and lithe body "not only fit Balanchine's ideal but also helped to create it" (Genné cited in Fisher, 2016:591). Gottschild (1998:65) notes that: "Balanchine's preference for type has been a significant force in changing the preferred body shape of the present-day ballerina. No longer the long-waisted, short-legged body type of the classical Russian ballerinas

Pavlova to Plisetskaya, she is the reverse; a long-legged new woman with a proportionately short torso". Genné's reference to Baker is similar to Gottschild's observations of Balanchine-type bodies.

According to Banes, Balanchine was notably influenced by the black dancer's body: "his observations of the black dancing body's suppleness was a quality which he admired in a dancer, this appreciation influenced a new perception of the dancing body" (1994:59).

Gotschild's research similarly shows that Balanchine was influenced by the black dancing body, and that "he was also seeking to use (or, from the Europeanist perspective, to improve upon) qualities that he saw as native to the black dancing body" and he "sought out these movement qualities in white dancers" (Gotschild, 1998:64). It is ironic that Balanchine, one of the major pioneers in ballet's history, should choose to model his ideal dancer's body on the 'black dancing body' that was discriminated against by the commonly held Eurocentric perception, and was perceived as unsuited to performing ballet. These ideas will be explored throughout this thesis. Balanchine's innovation changed American ballet's concept of the ideal dancer's body from its original solely European image.

1.10 Conclusion

The representation of gender roles in ballet reflected the position of the sexes within a socio-cultural environment, which was imitated in the creation of traditional ballets. Although some ballet repertoire roles were traditionally cast, for example, the virginal roles of the 'white' ballerina in *ballet blanc*, should these traditional ballet narratives be kept alive? For instance, if black dancers are available to perform these parts, then today's artistic directors should consider diversifying racial representations, rather than maintaining the traditional ideology of 'whiteness' when casting these roles. Nevertheless, society is forever changing and representations of gender roles in modern ballets are slowly altering – is it time for ballet to revisit and update its traditional narrative roles?

The concept of the ideal ballet body is mainly based on long limbs, technical ability and lyricism. Ballet bodies have changed according to socio-cultural influences and evolving

concepts of ideal beauty. Balanchine's ideal body was likely inspired by his love of black music, particularly jazz and dance, which he experienced whilst he was studying in Russia and in Paris during the Harlem Renaissance.

Non-European countries like India and Egypt have helped to inspire themes of choreographic works over the centuries. Although 'whiteness' in ballet is evident because of its European establishment and the dancers that have performed its repertoire, nevertheless, the effects of African creative influences are present in the 'overt'ness of exoticism in Diaghilev ballets, and the 'covert'ness as in Balanchine. These concepts require future research. The next chapter will analyse the perceptions of the black body, to evaluate where negative stereotypes and labels originated and how representations of institutional racism continue to typecast black dancers.

CHAPTER TWO

PERCEPTIONS OF THE BLACK BODY

Can we consider a postcolonial theory of the dancing body? What would it look like? Whom might it serve? Would we do better to consider postcolonial representations of the body on stage? But what of the dancing bodies themselves?

(DeFrantz, 2004:145)

2.0 Introduction

Eurocentric perceptions of the unsuitability of the black body for ballet have been well documented by dance critics and writers such as John Martin ([1963] 1970:178-179); Arnold Haskell (1930:445); dancer, teacher and choreographer Ernestine Stodelle (1968); and Don McDonagh (1968:41-44), and their work will be evaluated in Chapter Four. This topic is documented by African American dance scholars like Thomas DeFrantz (1996; 2002; 2002, 2006), Brenda Dixon Gottschild (1998; 2003; 2011) and Nadine George-Graves (2010:37). One of the key concepts influencing these negative perceptions is that of the black dancing body as 'primitive'. For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that the term 'primitive' could not have come into existence without the presence of an opposite; an 'other' that considered itself 'civilised' and therefore superior. Consequently, the term 'primitive' is inherently racist and impossible to dissociate from largely Western assumptions of cultural supremacy. Black dancers performing genres from the African Diaspora have historically been performing in a 'primitive' style by dance critics and writers from the 1930s onwards. The aim of this chapter is to examine issues of race with reference to representations of the black body through Eurocentric assumptions of 'primitive' culture. It is important to note that references to 'primitive' or 'savage' dance/culture from the eighteenth century onwards are often generic terms referring to non-western or 'other' cultures, although for the purposes of this chapter, it will refer to cultures from the African Diaspora. By deconstructing the ideologies of the black body, an evaluation of perceptions of the black female and male body will also be carried out. To conclude, this chapter will consider whether Eurocentric perceptions of the black body have limited the opportunities for black dancers both historically and in the present.

2.1 Perpetuation of ideologies

To evaluate why the black dancing body was referred to as a 'primitive' or a 'savage' body, the origins of these perceptions must first be established through historical analysis. Dance scholar Jane Desmond (1997:36) provides a summary of the 'discourse of the body', which can be applied to this study of the dancing body:

Dance, as a discourse of the body, may in fact be especially vulnerable to interpretations in terms of essentialized identities associated with biological difference. These identities include race and gender and the sexualised associations attached to bodies marked in those terms, as well as national or ethnic identities when these are associated with racial notions, as they so often are.

Desmond's statement highlights areas that have been researched in terms of representations of 'race, gender, biology and sexualisation', which will help establish the foundation for this discussion of the black body. The concept of deconstructing the black body is known as 'racialisation'. Sociologist Robert Miles (1989:75) provides a description of this term:

The concept of racialisation to refer to those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities. [...] The concept therefore refers to a process of categorisation, a process of defining an Other [...]

Racialisation of the 'other' in relation to black people "began with the sixteenth-century contact between European traders and the West African kingdoms, which provided a source of black slaves for three centuries. Its effects were to be found in slavery and in the post-slave societies of the New World" (Hall, 1997:239). It is important to mention that during the seventeenth century, King Louis XIV – who institutionalised ballet by founding the Académie Royale de Danse in 1661, as described in Chapter One – was involved with the enslavement of Africans in the Caribbean. France colonised and claimed ownership of several islands in the Caribbean during the seventeenth century, namely "St Kitts, St. Eustatius, Grenada, Dominica, Martinique, Guadeloupe, St Barthélemy, St. Martin and St. Domingue also known as Haiti" (Page, 2003:224). In 1685, Louis XIV was also responsible for disseminating the *Code noir* or the 'black code', by which he introduced 60 articles or rules giving slave masters control over slaves living under French colonial rule. For example, "it demanded absolute obedience from the slave, who could own no property and was punishable by death for striking whites. [...] Article 42 allowed owners to chain and whip them" (Knight, 1997:

201). Although the *Code noir* was enforced in 1685, it contradicted its 1571 agreement that “officially barred the metropole where French judges laid down the principle that ‘there are no slaves in France’” (Pokin, 2011:17). Historian Hugh Thomas (1997:13) notes that Louis XIV’s ministers offered bounties to French slave traders “for every slave delivered to the New World”. Therefore, the racialisation of black people was embedded in French colonial rule, which was in turn influenced by the *Code noir* during the seventeenth century. It is interesting to note that the rise of ballet occurred alongside an intensification of racism and colonialism. Louis XIV’s actions have contributed to Eurocentric perceptions of black people, which in turn have shaped depictions of the black body in ballet over the centuries in Western society. An investigation of the socio-cultural perceptions of black dance and the black body during this historical period will be examined in Chapter Three.

Black people have historically been portrayed as different and primitive through “racialized discourse [...] structured by a set of binary oppositions. There is the powerful opposition between ‘civilization’ (white) and ‘savagery’ (black)” (Hall, 1997: 243). By using the label ‘savagery’, cultural theorist Stuart Hall emphasises the negative representation of black people through Eurocentric perceptions. Miles (1989:39) defines the use of the term ‘savages’ and its connotations towards African/black people and explains that: “In the act of defining Africans as ‘black’ and ‘savages’, and thereby excluding them from their world, Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were representing themselves as ‘white’ and ‘civilised’”. Historically, binary oppositions related to power and status were represented on many levels and created racial division through cultural superiority. A similar example of these ideologies were dark-skinned or black people being perceived as ignorant, mindless or uncivilised, whilst light-skinned or white people were alleged to be more knowledgeable and civilised. These ideas will be further explored with reference to black dancers’ experience of being cast into specific roles in ballets in Chapter Nine. The concept of labels like ‘savage’ and ‘uncivilised’ in association with black people are examined in the next section, which discusses the effects of evolutionary theory on racial prejudice.

2.2 'Primitive' black bodies and science

Eurocentric perceptions of the black body have mainly been documented throughout history from anthropological or scientific perspectives. For instance, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, scientists, pseudo-scientists, philosophers, biologists and anthropologists like Sir William Lawrence (1783–1867), Robert Knox (1791–1862), Charles Darwin (1809–1882), Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau (1816–1882), Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) and Sir Francis Galton (1822–1911), amongst others, were questioning the 'evolution of man' and the human 'race' through various research studies (Cohen, 1999:182). Historian Peter Fryer (1984:170) cites Sir William Lawrence's work, a pseudo-scientist and phrenologist who studied human skulls by measuring them, to establish a connection between 'culture' and 'race'. He comments:

The Negro structure [...] approximates unequivocally to that of the monkey. Black people indulge, almost universally, in disgusting debauchery and sensuality, [...] insensibility to beauty of form, order and harmony [...] The inferiority of the dark to the white races is much more general and strongly marked in the powers of knowledge and reflection, [...] I deem, the moral and intellectual character of the Negro inferior, and decidedly so, to that of the European. (Lawrence, [1819] 1984:170-171)

Lawrence was one of many scientists whose ideas influenced the Victorians and future generations in terms of the representation of black people. Sociologists John Solomos and Les Back (1996:42-45) cite other key influences on racialisation: for example, Robert Knox published Races of Men (1850), which discusses the "Anglo-Saxon race as the most developed species of humankind". As discussed in Chapter Nine, former black British ballet dancer Carol Straker experienced a teacher making a comment about showing her "how the Anglo Saxons like to jump" in ballet class (Straker, 2002). It is evident that these historical associations were still alive over two centuries after these ideas were written. More about Straker's career in ballet will be examined in Chapter Nine.

Another example of a scholar from this era was French writer and ethnologist Comte Arthur de Gobineau, who categorised cultures in terms of race as "white, yellow and black" in his Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races (1853). De Gobineau's theory of race would later influence the ideology of the "Aryan race as the creators of civilization", a concept used by Adolf Hitler and the Nazis (Hutton, 2005:80). Scientists and pseudo-scientists like

Lawrence, Knox and De Gobineau favoured ideologies of empowerment over 'inferior races'. Whilst Darwin's theories of evolution may have clarified the origin of humans, they were often adapted and used to support racist beliefs. For instance, philosopher Herbert Spencer coined the expression 'survival of the fittest', which was his interpretation of Darwin's natural selection and of the natural instincts of 'animal existence'. He later applied this theory to "study psychological development of 'primitive' races and 'civilized' races" (Fryer, 1984:179). The concept of European empowerment was fuelled by Darwin's half-cousin Sir Francis Galton, an anthropologist, who devised the concept of 'nature and nurture' – analysing an individual's personal experience through the influence of their environment. Sociologist Chris Shilling explains this concept of 'nature': "Naturalistic views hold that the capabilities and constraints of human bodies define individuals, and generate the social, political and economic relations which characterize national and international patterns of living. [...]" Naturalistic views have also influenced how sociologists have conceptualized and analysed the human body. This has mainly been a negative influence, as sociologists have tended to react against the methods adopted by naturalistic views" (Shilling, [1993] 2003:37). Galton went on to devise the concept of 'eugenics', which was a theory of improving the population by controlled breeding to produce desirable inherited characteristics, with the intention of preserving the white race. Sociologist Phil Cohen (1999:186) explains: "the Eugenics movement was the eradication of 'inferior races' and the elevation of 'superior races' based on the idea that intelligence, criminality, and social 'traits' were in and of themselves determined exclusively by heredity". It is important to remember that the theory of eugenics also influenced Nazism (Kühl, 1994:4).

Darwin's discovery of evolution should in theory have united 'humankind' based on his findings that everyone belongs to one race – the 'human race' – but some scholars adapted his theories to suit their own purposes, classifying people by skin colour and ethnicity, as in the cases of Knox, Spencer and Galton, amongst others. Phrenology fuelled Eurocentric ideology through its pseudo-scientific methods to promote European superiority over the 'other', more 'primitive' races. Sociologist David Green summarises these views:

Though not immune to the 'white man's burden' [approach], anthropology was drawn through the course of the nineteenth century, even more towards causal connections

between race and culture. As the position and status of the 'inferior' races became increasingly to be regarded as fixed, so socio-cultural differences came to be regarded as dependent upon hereditary characteristics [...] Socio-cultural differences among human populations became subsumed within the identity of the individual human body [...] the body became the totemic object, and its very visibility the evident articulation of nature and culture. (Green, 1997:244)

The body, described by Green as 'totemic object', exemplifies the roots of the racialisation of the black body. If the black body is racialised as 'inferior' or as a 'totemic object', then why is the 'white' or European body 'ideal'? The early nineteenth-century ideologies of race generated from Darwin's research and adapted by other scholars have influenced negative perceptions of black people that are still active today. Cultural studies scholar Lola Young (1995:42) notes that "the idea of different, inferior 'races' established during the eighteenth century by scientists, philosophers and planters and so on systematized and legitimated racial prejudice and discrimination and enshrined it in social policies and in the law". Considering Young's comments, negative perceptions continue to be part of 'human' existence; nevertheless, evolutionists have contributed immensely to these views, even though they were written over a century ago. The effect of these opinions on black people will be analysed in the following section.

2.3 'Unattractive' black people?

Since the age of Enlightenment, black people have been stereotyped as being ugly, grotesque and/or oversexualised (Hobson, 2005:10). When explorers, traders and missionaries came into contact with native people, it resulted in enthusiastic anthropological interest during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Earlier scientists used craniology to explain their perceptions of beauty, such as the German physician Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840), who believed that Caucasians possessed the most beautiful skulls, whilst Pieter Camper (1722–1789), a Dutch anatomist, and other scholars considered the African skull structure to be 'animalistic' and as particularly similar to that of monkeys. The African brain was deemed smaller than the European brain and was thus perceived to be inferior and 'ugly' (Young, 1995:43; Fryer, 1984:167). Humanities scholar David Theo Goldberg (1993:30) notes that "by the late eighteenth century, beauty was

established in terms of racial properties: fair skin, straight hair, orgnathous jaw, skull shape and size, well composed bodily proportions and so on”.

Scientific scholars such as German polygenist Christoph Meiners (1747–1810) adapted these theories, developing the “hypothesis of two races, the beautiful White and the ugly Brown and Black, together with the belief in European superiority” (Rupp-Eisenreich, 2014:70). Meiners’ ideas on the concept of beauty were also influenced by his study of Roman and especially Greek civilisations where “he joined most of his German contemporaries in locating the ideal of human beauty in ancient Greece” (Painter, [2010] 2011:88). Meiners’ perceptions of aesthetic beauty were similar to ballet’s early artistic influences from Greek and Roman sculpture, which inspired interpretations of ‘classic’ grace and purity in the dance form, as described in Chapter One (Adair, 1992:83). Meiners’ observations of black people were also influenced by evolutionists who believed they resembled and were descended from apes, therefore “he considers ugly races [to be] permanently inferior and animal-like” (Issac, 2006:105). Though Meiners categorised people based on the colour of their skin, he also contributed to the development of a hierarchy of race based on aesthetic perceptions of beauty. These concepts were also adopted by other scholars such as English physician Havelock Ellis (1859–1939), who developed a scale of beauty where Europeans were at the top, whilst black people were placed firmly at the bottom (Ellis, [1905] 1992:181). By undermining black people through such racialised perceptions of beauty, these concepts diluted their humanity and thus aided Europeans to develop another justification for slavery and imperialism. Indeed, these concepts were so widespread it is unsurprising that they also influenced the evolution of a ballet aesthetic.

2.4 The sexualisation of the black body

Black people endured further exploitation from the Victorians when they focused their attention on the sexualisation of the race. Black male and female bodies intrigued anthropologists and other scientists, who were particularly taken with ideas on the survival of humanity through procreation. They developed further studies on the sexual differences between the races, with a predominant focus on the assumed differences between African

and European races. Goldberg (1993:28) notes that “it is at this moment that hierarchies founded on sexual, racial and class differences were systematised and intertwined”. Darwin concluded in his first book The Origin of Species (1859) that all humankind were descendants from Africa, as mentioned above, and “related to the apes” (Solomos and Back, 1996:45). Sociologists Solomos and Back referred to his work and found that:

Some cited Darwin’s work as proof that Africans were doomed eventually to disappear in favour of the ‘stronger’, European ‘race’. In other words, Darwin’s notion of struggle for existence was reworked as a confrontation between so-called ‘races’ and natural selection wedded to the existing ideas of ‘racial’ typology. This was perhaps not surprising in the wider context of colonial expansion and imperial domination that characterised the period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
(Solomos and Back, 1996:45)

Darwin also focused on sexual selection and race, which led to his book The Descent of Man, Selection in Relation to Sex (1871). His research developed from observations on the procreation of species including insects, fish, mammals and eventually humans (Hoquet, 2015:14). Darwin, like other scholars of his time, believed that by observing the sexual habits of different races one could discover more about their socio-cultural environment. Following these observations, scholars like American neurologist George M. Beard (1839–1883) assumed that those who were “black were of a race that had ceased evolving, he declared they were ‘uncivilized’, a state that explained not only their mental inferiority but their physical superiority – most of all in the areas of sex and sex organs” (Friedman, 2008:127). It could be argued that scholars like Beard racialised black men and women as erotic oversexed beings because they could no longer view black people as the only descendants from the apes, following Darwin’s studies which proved that all humankind originated from Africa. Young (1995:46) summarises these ideas:

By the end of the eighteenth century, black people were frequently characterized as representing sexual deviancy: furthermore, theories of natural selection were appropriated and used to validate the belief that the superior white group would be detrimentally transformed by mixing with other ‘inferior’ groups, particularly black people.

The stereotyping of black people through sexualisation during this period enabled white people to distance themselves through a false hierarchy and to avoid interracial mixing, following Darwin’s discoveries on the origins of humankind from apes. To clarify these ideas, humanities scholar Sally Kitch explains:

The survival of higher cultures depended on preventing the dilution of “superior” blood by exposure to the inferior blood of minority races, especially that of Negroes (and the Chinese, who were sometimes classified as black). As the institution of slavery promoted white men’s cross-racial reproduction, especially in the U.S., white women were increasingly held responsible for transmitting white racial blood and therefore, for preserving white supremacy. (Kitch, 2009:45)

The safeguarding of the white race by not crossbreeding with other races was important to preserve the next generations, so it is ironic that the responsibility was placed on white women and not the white men who were raping their black female slaves and interbreeding (Smith, 2004:6). Historian Merrill Smith notes that “in the system of chattel slavery developed in the United States and abolished in 1865, African American slave women were frequently raped. They could be legally raped by their white masters, the young sons of their white masters, and employees of their master, such as white overseers on Southern plantations” (Smith, 2004:6). The stereotypes of black female sexuality will be examined in the following sections.

African American writer bell hooks highlights the exploitation and stereotyping of sexuality “to inscribe blackness as ‘primitive’ sign, as wildness, and with it the suggestion that black people have secret access to intense pleasure, particularly pleasures of the body” (hooks, 1992:34). It is important to mention that variations in shade of black skin also influenced the degree of perceived sexualisation of the individual. For instance, the slave hierarchies were established based on skin tones: dark-skinned people worked in the fields and were characterised as “oversexed, savage, violent and frenzied for white flesh” (Hall, 1996:251), whilst lighter-skinned or mixed-race people were usually a product of rape and abuse by the slave masters, and usually worked in the house. They were characterised as “beautiful, sexually attractive and often exotic [...] white blood makes her ‘acceptable’ even attractive to white men” (Hall, 1997:251). Does the shade of black peoples’ skin colour (also known as shadism or colourism) similarly influence the roles they perform on the ballet stage? Shadism will be discussed throughout the following chapters. Unsurprisingly, the sexualisation of the black body became an object of discriminatory investigation by scientists and led to further suppression of black people through the establishment of racial stereotypes.

2.5 The black male body

The black man was racially characterised as sexualised and highly sexually active with a very large penis (Hall, 1997:263). Early travellers and traders who went to Africa had often seen black people barely dressed and half-naked, and looking at their exposed bodies helped create the overgeneralised preconceptions that all black men had large penises (Kitch, 2009:31-32). Young (1995:45) notes “the myth of black male hypersexuality existed before the peak of colonial expansion”. Young (1995:49) also mentions that “in the nineteenth century European popular imagination, the sexual prowess of African men and the dimensions of their genitalia were ‘known’ to be excessive and black men’s sexual organs were frequently objects of study”. Scientific research on the evolution of sexual selection established that not only were black people a threat to white civilisation due to the possibility of interbreeding, but that black men were to refrain from having any relationships with white women, who were considered the gatekeepers of white racial purity.

Stereotyped notions about the penis caused black men to be viewed as rapists during slavery and this continued even after the abolition of slavery in 1865 in the United States of America. They were often either castrated or lynched for merely looking at a white woman (Friedman, 2008:127-128; Segal, 1995:247). Hooks offers the following description of the black male body: “It is the young black male body that is seen as epitomizing this promise of wildness, of unlimited physical prowess and unbridled eroticism. It was this black body that was most ‘desired’ for its labor in slavery, and it is this body that is [...] watched, imitated, desired, possessed” (hooks, 1992:34). Whilst black men were considered a hypersexual threat to the preservation of white supremacy, white people also fantasised about the black penis because of pervasive myths of exoticism and orgies. Hall (1997:262) notes that “whites often fantasized about the excessive appetites and prowess of black men – as they did about the lascivious, over-sexed character of black women – *which they both feared and secretly envied* [emphasis in original]”. White men also envied its size and felt inadequate. As a result, many took pleasure in fondling it before castrating or lynching slaves who had committed crimes (Stokes, 2001:149).

During the Victorian era, scientists carried out many experiments on various species further to Darwin's research on sexual selection. Nevertheless, according to American cultural historian Sander L. Gilman, there have been no documented experiments on black male genitalia. He cites anatomist English William Turner (1832–1916), whose research found that “three dissections of male blacks in 1878, 1879, and 1896, makes no mention at all of the genitalia” (Gilman, [1985] 1997:181). Nonetheless, there were many references to dissections of female genitalia, which will be discussed in the next section, the black female body. DeFrantz provides an overview description of the black male slave body:

The black man's body entered America consciousness as a powerful exotic commodity: a slave. Objectified on the auction blocks of the African gold coast and the Caribbean, his body reached American shores bearing a tangle of opposing physical imperatives. As commodity, it was to hold enormous labor capacity; while as personal property, it was to be eminently repressible, docile, passive. These contradictory demands fed not only the physical foundations of slave society; they also framed modes of stage performance later practiced by black men, including concert dance.
(DeFrantz, 1996:107)

Based on Eurocentric perceptions, the black male body was strong, threatening and feared, yet in contrast he was also eroticised, lusted after and fantasised about as a phallic symbol. Is this all the black male body amounted to? Considering DeFrantz's description, these ideas continued to be reinforced and represented in black males performing on the stage. Nevertheless, are black male characters in ballet repertoire sexualised or presented as erotic or exotic? These ideas will also be explored throughout the following chapters.

2.6 The black female body

Similarly, to the black man, the black woman was also described as hypersexual and often referred to as having sex with simians. Regarding black sexuality, Gilman discusses the naturalist theories of George-Louis Leclerc and Comte de Buffon (1707–1788), who

commented on the lascivious, ape-like sexual appetite of the black, introducing a common place of early travel literature into a 'scientific' context. He stated that this animal-like sexual appetite went so far as to lead black women to copulate with apes. The black female thus comes to serve as an icon for black sexuality in general.
(Gilman, [1985] 1997:176)

As mentioned above, in slavery, black women were abused and raped by their slave masters, who were the same men who did not want interbreeding within their race. Though

children were often born from these interracial relationships, laws were devised to protect the slave masters from offspring who might potentially claim their father's property. Thus, children of slave mothers became slaves themselves, thereby diminishing parental responsibility (Young, 1995:48). These actions later led to the 'one drop' concept or 'hypodescent', in which 'one drop' of black blood from a parent from the African diaspora meant that person was automatically racialised as black (Gallagher and Lippard, 2014:563). Scientists' ongoing obsession with sexual selection led to further investigations of the black female body, especially her sexual organs, in comparison to the white female body. Cultural studies scholar Michael Borshuk (2003:53) notes how interest in "the black female body in the nineteenth century was perceived as emblematic of a purportedly 'primitive' sexual disposition, and fascination over sexual difference between the races sped European interest in its observation". Young also notes:

During this period [...] the anatomy of black females also held a fascination for members of the medical establishment and examinations of their bodies were a pervasive practice. [...] The perversity or abnormality was located in what was perceived as physical overdevelopment – 'large' buttocks, 'extended' genitalia and 'pendulous' breasts. (Young, 1995:49)

It could be argued that the 'abnormalities' scientists observed in black female bodies could belong to women from any 'race'. However, the examination of large buttocks became of extreme interest to the scientist and to the public, as Kitch's research found: "Since many African women had bigger pelvises than European women, they could be seen as superior procreators. But so intent were race 'scientists' to use gender data to prove Negro inferiority that they declared female pelvis size proof of Negroes' animality rather than of childbearing capacity" (Kitch, 2009:44). One of the most famous examples of derogatory sexualisation of a woman exhibited for public curiosity and entertainment was Saartje (or Sarah) Baartman, a slave from the Khoikhoi (which means "men of men") tribe, Cape of Good Hope, South Africa⁴.

⁴ African American scholar Kimberly Wallace-Sanders notes that:

In 1652 the Dutch established a refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope, which [...] became a colonial settlement. The people who they first and most frequently encountered there were pastoral nomads, short of stature, with light brown skin, and speaking a language with unusual clicks. The Dutch called these people Hottentots [...] Nineteenth century European scientists wrote about Hottentots, even though the racial/cultural group that late-twentieth-century anthropologists believe to merit that name had been extinct for at least three-quarters of a century. [...] In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Europeans often used the word *Hottentot* interchangeably with the word *Bushman* [emphasis in original]. (Wallace-Sanders, 2002:69)

According to historian Rachel Holmes, Baartman was called 'Hottentot' because the word "signified all that was strange, disturbing, alien and – possibly – sexually deviant. [...] Hottentot women [were] reputed to have enormous buttocks and strangely elongated labia" (Holmes, 2007:2). It could be argued that the term 'Hottentot' was used in a generic way to racialise and sexualise Baartman. Baartman also became known as the 'Hottentot Venus' and because of her protruding buttocks, was openly shown naked as a freak in London and Paris in the early 1800s (Holmes, 2007:55;118). Art historian Victoria Rovine explained that Baartman's buttocks inspired Victorian fashion, especially the bustle dress, which she describes as "tailored above the waist, the dress expanded to create a tent-like form with an enormous bustle extending from the rear. The bustle makes reference to Saartje Baartman's physiognomy, or more accurately the European fascination with her physiognomy" (2015:213). Dance scholar Brenda Dixon Gottschild also referred to Baartman's buttocks influencing white Victorian women's fashion:

That over-arching image of black female sexuality continued its hold on the European (male) imaginary through the twentieth century. What is ironic is the way the love-hate spectrum of black-white interactions is played out. In this instance, Baartman's so-called steatopygia, or medically oversized buttocks, metamorphosed by mid-century into a fashion accessory worn by white women. The bustle was essential to the Victorian dress code. It emphasized the very part of the female anatomy that on Sara Baartman was the object of derision. It is another example of the "appropriation-approximation-assimilation" syndrome of emigration/ transformation from black culture to white. In this convoluted case, the white witness embraced the idea of enhancing the buttocks but rejected the original body from which it was taken. They loved the aesthetic premise but detested its embodied black precedent. (Gottschild, 2003:151)

The representation of Baartman's buttocks inspired European dress during the Victorian era, thus enhanced white women's sexuality. This image led to her elevation and Baartman was given the stage name 'Venus', which "was simply a synonym for sex: to behold the figure of Venus, or to hear her name, was to be promoted to think about lust or love" (Holmes, 2007:2). Hall's research reveals:

Baartman became the embodiment of 'difference'. What's more, her difference was 'pathologized': represented as a pathological form of 'otherness'. Symbolically, she did not fit the ethnocentric norm which was applied to European women and, falling outside a western classificatory system of what 'women' are like, she had to be constructed as 'Other' [...] Her body was 'read', like a text, for the living evidence – the proof, the Truth – which it provided of her absolute 'otherness' and therefore of an irreversible difference between the 'races'. (Hall, 1997:265)

Baartman was categorised as 'primitive', not 'civilised' (Hall, 1997:266). When she died in 1815 her sexual organs were displayed in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris and returned to South Africa only in 2002 on the request of then-president Nelson Mandela (Holmes, 2007:189). Scientists later began to dissect her genitals in order to explore whether they were excessively large due to hypersexual activity (Young, 1995:49). Hall's analysis of Baartman implies that her body type led to a widely-held assumption that all black bodies, especially female bodies, resembled hers. Eurocentric perceptions of Baartman's black body have had a negative influence on perceptions of the black dancing body, which later became an obstacle for progression in the dance arena. Hall (1997:244) notes:

The body itself and its differences were visible for all to see, and thus provided the 'incontrovertible evidence' for a naturalisation of racial difference. The representation of 'difference' through the body became the discursive site through which this 'racialized knowledge' was produced and circulated.

The black female body was perceived as oversexed; it was abused physically and scientifically, and was publicly humiliated for representing the 'other'. Dance scholar Nadine George-Graves' work can be used to summarise the representation of black women:

Black women have had to contend with the legacy of this stereotype of pathology that has stigmatized their very existence in western society. Indeed, the true pathology might be Europeans' and North Americans' simultaneous attraction to and repulsion from the black female body through a fictionalized construction of black female identity. This complex, distorted desire conflates everything in the lower regions (the buttocks, genitals, hips) as the locus of the mysterious, primitive, wild, grotesque, risqué, dangerous, and base. This process of classifying and stereotyping was a way for whites to define their identities against blackness. By retaining control of agency in this relationship, they could assure themselves that nobody would challenge this system and that their senses of self were secure. (George-Graves, 2010:57)

Given the public demoralisation that Baartman suffered, especially about her protruding bottom, it is ironic to note that the female bottom is still sexualised today, especially in current Rap, Hip Hop and Reggae music videos and in music videos in general. Scholars Diane Railton and Paul Watson highlight these representations and explain:

While the 'protruding black butt' undoubtedly remains an important lyrical and visual feature of music videos a number of other tropes also link these contemporary representations of blackness back to Victorian modes of race representation. Indeed, through regular and explicit references to the natural and the animal, the black female body and the sexuality continue [...]. (Railton and Watson, 2011:97)

Whilst some choreography in music videos accentuates the black female buttocks, ironically the dancers continue to perpetuate these movements based on Eurocentric stereotypes. However, while these women are in a more positive situation in which they own their bodies

and are in control of their sexuality, this nevertheless remains a contested issue. For example, hooks spoke on a panel discussing 'Are You Still a Slave? Liberating the Black Female Body' at The New School for Social Research in New York (2014). She debated the representation of African American pop singer Beyoncé on the cover of *Time* magazine, where she was featured as "one of the most influential people" while posing in underwear. Journalist Roxane Gay reported on hooks' opinions:

"From my deconstructive point of view... she's colluding in the construction of herself as a slave...it's not a liberatory image." This rhetoric of women 'enslaving themselves', becoming ever more beholden to the patriarchy when they present themselves sexually, is common. It's quite the contradiction to want to overthrow the patriarchy but to also believe that, even now, the patriarchy is so omnipotent that women are incapable of making empowered decisions when they make decisions that don't toe the feminist party line. (Gay, 2014)

It is apparent that Beyoncé portrays an image that perpetuates racial Eurocentric stereotypes that most modern-day liberated black women do not want to be represented by. Whilst commercial dancing and music videos are a different genre to ballet, do black female dancers similarly perform sexually stereotyped characters and roles in ballet repertoire? These ideas will be explored throughout the following chapters.

It is worth pointing out that although Baartman was exhibited over 200 years ago, human exhibitions or human zoos took place up until 1958 at the Brussels World Fair in Belgium, where Congo villages were "living spectacles" (Chrisafis, 2011 online). Since the 1958 exhibition, various replications of villages have been displayed throughout the world, with an educational intent, though not to the extremes of Baartman's humiliation. However, in 2014, South African theatre artist Brett Bailey brought his exhibition Exhibit B, a human zoo to the Barbican Theatre in London to show how black people (performed by black actors) were caged and displayed representations of human zoos from the nineteenth century. The British public protested and petitioned against the show going ahead because of its racist connotations, and on 24 September 2014 the show was cancelled (Independent, 2015 online). It could be argued that the black body is still being shown in a derogatory manner, even without the duress of the historical slave master – now replaced by commercial exploitation. For example, the Index on Censorship organisation, which "campaigns for and defends free expression worldwide" (Index on Censorship, 2017 online) reported on Exhibit

B and was concerned that the “fear of such controversy, and the possible impact on sponsors, has already led to artistic self-censorship” (Bennett, 2014). It is apparent that the Index on Censorship was more troubled by the possible financial loss of sponsorship than the ‘freedom of expression’ held by 22,000 online public petitioners who objected to the exhibit. The organisation was also concerned about the impact the closure had on issues of censorship by artists on themselves in the future. But how have the perceptions of black male and female bodies been represented in documentation and dance literature? This is examined in the following section.

2.7 Early dance writers on ‘primitive’ dance

Eurocentric representations of the black body influenced early evolutionary scientists, as discussed above. In order to understand how these views affected the dance world at the time, critical discourse analysis theory, as described in the early methodology of linguistics scholar Norman Fairclough (1995:2), is used to decipher how the work of early dance writers from the mid-nineteenth century influenced their peers through the ‘consumption’ and ‘distribution’ of language in the written text. Dance scholar Theresa Buckland (2014:174) explains:

The battle to confront outdated scholarship and the racism of Victorian evolutionist interpretations of dance continues against much of the populist literature and websites on dance. [...There was] dominant [...] use of evolutionary theory to underpin contemporary attitudes towards women, children, and people of non-European lineage (consistently referred to as ‘savages’ and ‘primitives’) as being lower in the evolutionary scale by virtue of their supposed biological affinity for dancing.

Some early dance writers from the late nineteenth-century often wrote about European dance history, tracing its origins back to biblical times, including ‘Greek and Roman antecedents’ (Buckland, 2014:174). The popularity of anthropological and scientific discoveries led dance writers to introduce non-western dance forms in their books, often cited in chapters on ‘primitive’ or ‘savage’ dance forms (Kreemer, 2008:20; Kealiinohomoku, [1969] 1983). Buckland (2014:174) highlights the content of the early dance writer’s books: “‘Victorian dance pedagogues’ tendency to recycle past literature in their dance manuals, and their often limited time and education typically restricted access to and interest in the latest scientific ideas”. These writers introduced chapters on ‘primitive’ or ‘savage’ dance,

and wrote about these cultures extensively, including authors like Edward Scott (1852–1937); Lilly Grove (1855–1941); Ethel Urlin (1858–1935); Leo Frobenius (1873–1938); Wilfrid Dyson Hambly (1886–1962) and Curt Sachs (1881–1954). These writers contributed to the evolution of dance theory by setting out a Eurocentric history of dance. Scott and Grove were acknowledged by Buckland (2014) as two prominent dance historians who wrote influential books during the late nineteenth century. Similarly, dance anthropologist Drid Williams notes their work. Both scholars will be used to briefly discuss Scott and Grove's work with reference to the use of the labels 'primitive' or 'savage'. Scott was an 'English dancing master', who was the "international authority on the practice and history of dancing [...] Scott's explications of the origin and early history of dancing in his *Dancing in All Ages* (1899) are close to the dancing masters' traditional understanding of dance history as being rooted in the records of biblical and classical antiquity" (Buckland, 2014:175). Some of Scott's studies associated dance with Palaeolithic man, and referred to the "'natural' dancing of children and savages" (Buckland, 2014:181). Williams notes ([1991] 2004:26): "He thought that the 'natural dancing of Palaeolithic man' was the origin of all dancing, and he actually describes this form of dancing as if he had been there" (1899:1-2). Buckland's research found that in "Scott, keen to promote his art as civilized, references to the practices of savages were deployed principally to criticize contemporary manners and fashion" (Buckland, 2014:181). Buckland argues that Scott's research on non-western 'savage' civilisations made his work consistent with the Eurocentric evolutionary and anthropological ideologies of his time. Buckland (2014:175) notes that both writers considered Western dance forms to be the most advanced and civilised, and that these ideas were inspired by the works of evolutionists "Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) and Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and evolutionary anthropologist Edward Tylor (1832–1903) and James Frazer (1854–1941)" as well as Curt Sachs (1881–1959).

2.7.1 Lilly Grove (1855–1941)

Grove, also known as Lady Frazer, the wife of anthropologist Sir James Frazer, was a French teacher and traveller who wrote *Dancing* (1895), "a monograph in which evolutionary anthropology is the main interpretive framework" (Buckland, 2014:176). Williams describes

Grove as having “no direct experience of dancing to her writing” and expresses astonishment at “how she could imagine that she could speak authoritatively about so many peoples whom she had never seen nor met” (Williams, [1991] 2004:31). Buckland (2014:184) points out that Grove’s husband Frazer had documented “various examples in *The Golden Bough* that relate dancing to primitive ritual [and that this] undoubtedly identified him as an obvious expert to tap for information on ‘savage dances’”. The depiction of Grove illustrates that while she was not a dancer, she was inspired by travelling, documenting travel writers’ experiences, and exploring her husband Frazer’s knowledge and experience of dance from his research. Buckland’s and Williams’ conclusion on Scott is hardly more complimentary in that it portrays him as a notable dance master who was interested in promoting the civilised status of dancing in society. Inspired by scientific ideas, he theorises his ideology on non-western ‘primitive’ and ‘savage’ cultures in dance, partly to enhance his popularity. Both Scott and Grove were able to gain their reputation as experts on dance history by documenting non-western dance forms, although they achieved this almost entirely through the use of secondary source material.

2.7.2 Ethel Urlin (1858–1935)

Dance scholar Gayle Kassing also found that Grove and Ethel Urlin “wrote about ‘savage’ dances. Urlin made the connection between early human dancers and those performed by ‘primitive tribes’ throughout the world at the time of her writing” (Kassing, 2007:36). There is very little written about the anthropologist; she published *Dancing Ancient and Modern* (1912) and her investigations claimed that:

The result of research into the history of primitive civilisations seems to prove that dancing is the first art, as it is the earliest impulse that takes an outward embodiment. Just as the individual infant makes its feelings known by cries and gestures, so pre-historic man, striving to find an outlet for the various passions which move him, resorts also to these primitive modes of expression. (Urlin, 1912:i)

This excerpt from Urlin’s introduction reveals that she was also influenced by early evolutionism in much the same way as Grove and Scott. The connections she made between ‘pre-historic man’ and dance are similar. She relates the infant to pre-historic man, just as Scott links palaeolithic man to the “natural dancing of children and savages” (Buckland, 2014:181). It could be argued that when Urlin uses the term ‘primitive

civilisations', in this instance it refers to the origins of dance from 'pre-historic man'; whilst her chapter on 'Primitive Dances' (1912:2-16) refers to non-western dance forms, which are sometimes described as 'savage'. The content of her chapter provides a short description of 'primitive' dance forms, which imply that Umlin likely did not travel to observe dances in their countries of origin, but that she may have garnered knowledge from other travellers like Grove to include in her book. At the beginning of her book, Umlin acknowledges that she consulted Grove and Scott when researching. Buckland's (2014:190) research explains how dance writers appropriated material from each other during this period: "Evolutionary theory, predominantly used in a piecemeal and sometimes second- or third-hand fashion by isolated specialist writers on dance or by writers for whom dancing was an adjunct to their main focus, provided an intellectual framework for buttressing existing social attitudes on race and gender".

2.7.3 Wilfrid Dyson Hambly (1886–1962)

Born 1886 in America, anthropologist Hambly was educated at Oxford and worked as a curator of African Ethnology in the Natural History Museum in Chicago. He then went to live and work with missionaries to "survey dancing and music as a communal activity and expression of emotion" and to complete fieldwork studies in a range of cultures from "ancient Egypt and the Inca civilisations of South America to North American Indians, Zulu Warriors, and the extinct Aborigines of Tasmania" (Amazon UK and Dance Books, 2015 online).

Williams evaluates Hambly's work, especially his book Tribal Dancing and Social Development (1926), based on his fieldwork in Sudan. She finds his use of terms such as 'primitive' and 'savages' to be "embarrassing", although this language was current and popular at the time amongst other dance writers, anthropologists and evolutionists (Williams, [1991] 2004:25). Williams states that Hambly's work

suggest[s] that through the study of the dances of primitive peoples, we shall discover something about the juvenile developments of mental progress that have led to rational, economically developed civilizations. [...] Hambly's typology of dances is nothing more than a natural history approach to the study of social phenomena [...] great use to naturalists but is of little use to anthropologists of human movement.

(Williams, [1991] 2004:24)

Williams' examination reveals Hambly's assumption that people from the Sudan possessed juvenile minds, further promoting the idea that traditional African cultures are underdeveloped because they were non-literate (Kealiinohomoku, [1969] 1983:544).

Williams' elaborates on Hambly's ideas to suggest he believed people "dance because their societies represent the childhood of humankind, implying that when the society 'grows up', so to speak, dancing will diminish in importance because it is a childish activity" (Williams, [1991] 2004:25-26). Dance anthropologist Joann Kealiinohomoku found these concepts regressive, and she notes that "contemporary primitives are not children in fact, nor can they be pigeonholed into some convenient slot on an evolutionary scale" ([1969] 1983:540).

Similarly, Hall's (1997:245) work on representation can be used to highlight Hambly, Scott, Grove and Urlin's ideology of primitive culture's association with childish behaviour, as these perceptions rapidly became established racialised stereotypes.

2.7.4 Leo Frobenius (1873–1938)

Frobenius, the German anthropologist and ethnologist, was interested in exploring and documenting primitive cultures through photographs and artefacts. From 1904 to 1935 he made 12 expeditions to Africa (Lewis, 2006:29). Although there is little documented in dance literature about Frobenius' work, Williams briefly refers to excerpts from his book The Childhood of Man (1909) about the "lives, customs and thoughts of the primitive races" (Williams, [1991] 2004:29-31), and this area requires further scholarly investigation. To summarise his work, historian Winfried Speitkamp comments:

Although Frobenius was the first Westerner to underline the cultural achievements of African history, most of his contemporaries still saw Africa as a continent without history. Although today most German ethnologists view Frobenius as an outsider whose research methods do not meet modern academic standards, because Frobenius constructed the immaterial heritage of African culture in the eyes of the West, in Africa he is seen as a pioneer of African emancipation [...].

(Speitkamp, 2015:50)

Frobenius was celebrated because he aspired to change Eurocentric perceptions of Africa as a 'primitive culture' by collecting artefacts, which he contested were from a continent that had a 'civilised' history. This led to European interest in collecting African art, seen as having an 'exotic' appeal from a mysterious culture (Flam, 2003:190). Williams analysed the work of

Scott, Grove, Hambly and Frobenius to establish that “despite their differences, [they] seem to imply that the origins of modern European dancing and civilization could be found by examining ‘primitive’ humankind, whether these were Australian Aborigines, groups of Africans, or Palaeolithic humanity” (Williams, [1991] 2004:31). Williams’ research on these scholars implies that they connected all dance movements and found them to have derived from similar primitive origins, while previous beliefs held that “‘civilized dancing’ is taken to be the implied apogee of all the ‘primitive’ forms of dancing that preceded it” (Williams, [1991] 2004:31).

2.7.5 Curt Sachs (1881–1959)

German musicologist and writer Curt Sachs (1881–1959) is also worth evaluating in terms of his attitudes to ‘primitive’ dance. He was not a dancer but he wrote World History of Dance (1937), which became the “encyclopaedia of dance in its time” (Kassing, 2007:36). Kassing (2007:36) explains the ideology behind the book: “Sachs expanded on the idea of ‘primitive dance’, providing many examples to support his premise that a direct connection existed between what happened in early times and what anthropologists observed in isolated tribes of the later 19th and early 20th centuries throughout the world”. Kassing (2007:36) also notes that “his book ‘became a standard in dance history’”. Similarly, dance sociologist Helen Thomas (1995:172) highlights that “dance writers have used it as a form of legitimation and a source of data”. Dance scholar Suzanne Youngerman (1974:6) notes just how influential Sachs’ book remains: “Many researchers still rely so heavily on Curt Sachs’ forty-year-old World History of the Dance for guidance in analyzing the style and socio-cultural significance of specific dance cultures, especially those of so-called ‘primitive’ societies”. Youngerman (1974) reviews Sachs’ book and established that most of his theoretical frameworks were developed from ‘English historical literature and anthropological’ concepts at the time. She explains that he never saw most of the dances he writes about, and therefore collated the information from travellers, using “second or third hand [...] casual remarks in travellers’ accounts, missionary reports, and old ethnographies” (Youngerman, 1974:6-7). Part of Sachs’ theories on primitive dance were related to the influence of animals, where dance was viewed as a form of natural or instinctive movement. In part, his theories were founded

on the evolutionary development of primitive cultures (Thomas, 1995:173). It is not difficult to make a connection between Sachs' theories of primitive dance being associated with the perception of black people as 'natural' dancers – the concept of "natural performers was closely related to the Exotic Primitive" (Perpener, 2005:23). The pervasiveness of this perception is also illustrated by dance scholar Susan Manning (2004:10) whose research on black dancers found that "white critics considered them 'natural performers'".

Influenced by early anthropological, scientific and evolutionary theory writers, Scott, Grove, Umlin and Hambly all contributed to Eurocentric perceptions of primitive or savage dance, performed by 'primitive' people and associated with juvenile or childish, natural and instinctual behaviour. These examples became widespread and are unfortunately stereotypes that are still perpetuated today. Although there were other dance writers in Sachs' time, his work stands out because of his ideas on primitive dance, collated from many sources such as travellers and journals, which helped to form the initial framework for researching and documenting non-Western dance. Kealiinohomoku suggests "that one cause for so much inaccurate and shocking misunderstanding on the subject of primitive groups is due to an overdependence on the words of Sir James Frazer and Curt Sachs whose works have been outdated as source material for better than three decades" (Kealiinohomoku, [1969] 1983:540). Williams ([1991] 2004:31) reveals that Scott, Grove, Hambly and Frobenius made unfounded assumptions about the origins and nature of primitive dance and assigned it a subordinate position in relation to European dance forms. These writers' perceptions helped lay the foundations for European dance history. Nevertheless, these ideologies began to be contested in the works of dance ethnographers such as Kealiinohomoku (1970), Youngerman (1974) and Williams (1977) during the 1970s (Thomas, 2003:79). Dance scholar Andrée Grau also wrote on this topic, although much later in 1993.

2.8 Conclusion

Binary cultural perceptions, especially early opinions on people from the African diaspora, have led to negative representations of black people throughout history. It is not surprising

that King Louis XIV, whilst institutionalising ballet, also endorsed the enslavement of black people in the Caribbean and demonstrated European supremacy in both areas. Darwin's scientific discoveries would spur on other scholars to put forth negative ideologies of black people that still affect society today. Preconceptions about the black male and his well-endowed penis still endure, and the example of Baartman's bottom is still associated with the female body today. The black body was given many negative stereotypes and names, and has been eroticised and sexualised even after the abolition of slavery. The art installation Exhibit B demonstrated that these perceptions of the black body are still alive, although recollections of its more brutal forms of oppression are not always appreciated by the British public as a whole. Ironically, some people today have internalised and exploited those labels, leading to those representations of black people in music and other mainstream videos shaking their bottoms. Potential black dancers who aspire to enter the ballet profession have a long history of their bodies being perceived negatively through institutionalised racism, from Louis XIV's enslavement of black people through to racist scientific and evolutionary ideologies. All of these have filtered down and were documented by early writers, thereby "perpetuating the evolutionary fallacy" (Grau, 1993:38). The next chapter will evaluate why black dancers were associated with primitive dance, and in turn will analyse how early American dance pioneers used this concept to make their genres more successful.

CHAPTER THREE

PRIMITIVE: ITS ASSOCIATIONS WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN DANCE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON AMERICAN DANCE CULTURE

Dance is a form of natural (essentialist) behaviour which, with its roots in 'primitive' cultures, has developed into a fully fashioned stylised western theatre dance, commonly regarded as the most advanced 'civilised' form. In so doing, they contested the hierarchical us/them relation and ethnocentrism in viewing dance as a primary feature (natural and ubiquitous) of 'primitive' cultures. (Thomas, 1995:172)

3.0 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter Two, black people have often been given negative labels such as savage, primitive, exotic and erotic. In this chapter, these labels will be further evaluated to determine the rationale for using these terms and why they are linked to black dance forms. This chapter will also explore how the term 'primitive dance' is used in relation to African American and modern dance genres. Critical discourse analysis is used to decipher the sourced material for this chapter, drawn from North American and African American dance literature and history, where much of the relevant research is centred. An investigation of Victorian evolutionary theories will analyse how these labels either assisted or hindered perceptions of black dancers. An examination of these perceptions will reveal in what ways Eurocentric ideologies have influenced institutional racism to contribute to the categorisation and cultural stereotyping of black dancers entering and pursuing careers in western dance genres like ballet or contemporary dance – for example, whether black dancers have only had access to performing primitive dance styles because of their cultural heritage.

3.1 What is primitive dance?

The term 'primitive dance' was often used to describe non-European dance forms that originated from non-literate societies (Kealiinohomoku, 1983[1969]:543). Dance anthropologist Joann Kealiinohomoku (1983[1969]:533) found that the scholars she researched categorised primitive dance as "non-western dance forms", but she argues that "there is no such thing as a 'primitive dance' form. [...] Every group has had its own unique history and has been subject to both internal and external modifications" (1983 [1969]:540). Therefore, Kealiinohomoku views the 'primitive dance' label as a term used to identify and

subordinate non-western dance forms. The timespan of when the term was used is important: for example, dance historian Ramsay Burt describes how it was used in the 1930s:

The term primitive at the time referred to what seemed a common-sense distinction between the social and cultural achievements of modern (Western) society and those of so-called primitive societies. [...] Primitive generally now appears in academic discourse between inverted commas. These common-sense notions of the primitive, it is now argued, have concealed an underlying blindness about the nature of the power relations between the dominant, Western nations and subordinate colonised or otherwise substantially dependent nations and societies. (Burt, 1998:137)

Non-western dance forms became more overtly referred to as 'primitive dance' by dance scholars and critics over the decades. Dance scholar Constance Kreemer's (2008:20) research similarly found:

There is evidence [...] that the early dance critics perpetuated racism by referring to "primitive dance". Writers such as [Agnes] deMille, [Walter] Sorell, [Walter] Terry, [John] Martin, and [Arnold] Haskell wrote many of the first dance-history books, which contained sections on primitive dance, with a separate section of "black dance history".

It is evident from Kreemer's research that 'primitive dance' and black dance history are collated separately in the first dance history books; however, black dance forms were also treated as a form of 'primitive dance' with a particular focus on dancers from the African diaspora. Nonetheless, Burt, Kreemer and Kealiinohomoku consider the term 'primitive' to be a negative and racist label. For the purposes of this chapter, the investigation of the term 'primitive dance' will focus on its association with African American dance, thus evaluating whether 'primitivism' has in fact modernised the aesthetics of European and American dance cultures.

3.2 African American concert styles and primitive dances

Research from the 1920s onwards shows that many dance critics believed black dancers could only perform vernacular or traditional dance forms. Historically, black dancers have performed traditional dances that were passed on from generation to generation (Nicholls, 1997:40). In the case of African Americans and their connections to cultural or traditional dance forms, these dance styles were reimagined during the slavery era, where social/vernacular dances were influenced by their cultural environment, as historian Robert Hinton (1988:4) explains:

Early in the slavery experience, Afro-American dance split into two basic streams. The first stream was the dance that black folk created for themselves during those few precious hours of sacred and secular celebration [...and was] more “African,” in part because of the movement quality and vocabulary, but also, because of the benefit of the dancers. The experience of any observers (the audience) was secondary. The second stream was the dance that black people created for white people [...which was] more “European,” both because of the technique and because the dance was created under differing degrees of duress for the pleasure of the audience. The experience of the performer was secondary.

An example of the ‘first stream’ of dance performed by African Americans is the Ring Shout, dating from the seventeenth century, which originated from religious circle dance traditions in West Africa, continued throughout the era of slavery and is still practiced today (David, 2007:21). Dance historians Marshall and Jean Stearns (1994:31) explain that the Ring Shout survived generations because

the Baptist Church prohibited drumming and dancing, which ruled out most African religious observances. But the Ring Shout happened to employ clapping and stamping instead of drumming, as well as a shuffle step in which the legs did not cross. Since the Baptists defined dancing as a crossing of legs, the Ring Shout was considered acceptable.

The Cake Walk was an example of the ‘second stream’ of dance forms also created by African Americans dating from the nineteenth century, in which the participants performed walking movements to music and song with the intention of mimicking and mocking their slave masters (Hinton, 1988:4). While the African American connections with dances from the African diaspora were a crucial way of maintaining their sense of sanity in the face of brutal subjugation, this historic association has also brought about stereotyped perceptions that have sometimes influenced dance critics. These opinions have stigmatised African American dancers in terms of their perceived abilities within the modern dance arena. For example, dance historian John Perpener (2005:1) highlights that from the early establishment of black concert dance, (1920s), “historical stereotypes of black performers – was not direct, positive artistic influence like the others. It did, however, have an impact on critics’ writings about black dancers, and it consequently affected the artists’ concerns about how they were perceived by the mainstream cultural establishment” (2005:1). From Perpener’s comments, it seems that black performers are stereotyped in two ways. One of these is when they perform a stereotypical role, like dancer Josephine Baker dancing in a banana skirt. This could be perceived as harmless role-play entertainment; however, when critics use Baker as an example to generalise that all black people perform primitive dance

styles, then these perceptions are potentially damaging to other artists. Baker will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter to evaluate her career as a dancer and how perceptions of her perpetuated stereotypical roles.

Predominantly during the 1920s and the start of the New Negro Movement (more popularly known as the Harlem Renaissance), civil rights activists aspired to create a platform for black arts and culture in order to highlight African Americans as intellectuals, thus attempting to redress the 'old negro' stereotypes (Jones, 2011:173). African American writer and philosopher Alain Locke's (1885–1954) work on the Harlem Renaissance describes this era as a "new phase of group development, and with it a spiritual Coming of Age" (Locke, [1925]1999:16). This movement led artists to question their own representation and the content of their repertoire, thus raising the important question of how to situate their work within the white, mainstream arena. Dance historian Julia Foulkes (2002:77) researched this period and found that "from the 1920s to the 1940s questions of racial representation and artistic responsibility burdened African American critics and dancers. Responses to these artists and artworks reinscribed the questions so that 'Negro art' was never free from the tentacles of representing 'the race'". Foulkes refers to African Americans pursuing freedom from the responsibility of racial representation within their art forms. Do these issues still resonate among today's dancers? These ideas will be explored further in the conclusion to this thesis.

Examples of African American dance forms from this period were either created for themselves, as described by Hinton as the 'first stream', from traditional African dance forms, whilst the second stream dance forms were created based on lived experiences, especially about issues of racism experienced in the southern United States (Hinton 1988:4; Manning, 2004:57). Foulkes' work found that:

Black dancers and choreographers formed their own companies and fused the principles of modern dance with the dance and ritual of the Caribbean and Africa. They established a distinct African American aesthetic in concert dance that drew from, but existed between, the primitive movement that Humphrey noted and the lindy hop and social dance that [dance critic Carl] Van Vechten applauded. (Foulkes, 2002:52)

Examples of African American dancers who formed companies using modern dance with traditional dances from Africa and the Caribbean are Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus. More about their work will be discussed later in this chapter to evaluate how their dance forms became established and accepted in the realms of American modern dance.

Regarding Foulkes' findings above, a summary of how Doris Humphrey and Carl Van Vechten perceived black dance as primitive will be examined here. Humphrey (1895–1958) was a former dancer of the Denishawn Company who founded her own dance style and company and a member of the influential Bennington School of the Dance during the 1930s and 1940s. Her experience of primitive dance led her to work on a dance in the play Run, Li'l Chillun! (1932) by Zora Neale Hurston (1891–1960), an African American folklore anthropologist and writer. It was noted that Humphrey choreographed this work to preserve the traditional Bahamian dance for the stage (Croft, 2002: xvi–xx; Foulkes, 2002:51). Carl Van Vechten (1880–1964) was an American writer, photographer and dance critic for The New York Times since 1906. He was known as the 'father of American dance criticism' during the 1920s, and he was inspired by and supported the Harlem Renaissance artists. Cultural studies scholar Joel Dinerstein notes that in 1930:

Van Vechten observed that every decade or so, an anonymous black dancer creates a new step that so excites the African American dancing public that "it spreads like water over blotting paper" and quickly becomes observable at levees, jook joints, urban dance halls and even on street corners. After two years or so, a Euro-American dancer or dance director, witness to the excitement generated by the new dance believes he or she can cross it over for "white consumption" and "introduces it, frequently with the announcement that he invented it." (Van Vechten quoted in Dinerstein, 2003:250)

Examples of African American dance styles that Van Vechten may have witnessed white Americans performing were "the Cake-Walk, the Bunny Hug, the Turkey Trot, the Charleston, and the Black Bottom" (Van Vechten quoted in Dinerstein, 2003:250). It is important to mention that this integration of black and white American vernacular dance forms was despised by modern dance pioneer Isadora Duncan (Daly, 1995:218-219), and more on her views will be discussed later in this chapter. Van Vechten's observations of African American dancers also shows how they were often perceived as primitive by white Americans, even though they were vernacular dance forms. Foulkes comments on their work:

This heralding of what Van Vechten and Humprey saw as the savage, “primitive” nature of dance among black peoples was typical of white modernist artists and set a particular place for African and African American aesthetics within modernism. The elemental force and physical exuberance of black peoples’ dancing fit into a vision of the fundamentals of being that white artists sought to expose. In this circumscribed view of the nature of black peoples, the place of African American artists themselves in modernism was quite restricted. (Foulkes, 2002:51)

Foulkes suggests that Van Vechten and Humprey’s observations of African American dance forms allowed white audiences to categorise those dance forms as ‘primitive’. The perceptions and parameters that modern artists imposed upon African Americans not only further stereotyped the genre and dance styles they performed, but it also limited dancers who were sometimes critiqued for venturing to perform other dance forms outside their cultural ‘norm’, like ballet or contemporary dance (Perpener, 2005:21). The extent to which these ideologies and parameters of black dance are still current in today’s society will be explored throughout and summarised in the final conclusion to this thesis.

Foulkes also refers to the nature of black people and to their ‘exuberance’. Perpener (2005:23) further explains these concepts:

A related idea that placed blacks in a neatly separatist category was based on the image of African-American men and women as the most “natural” beings in American society. This image supplied a number of white artists with a vision of black life that could express the elemental side of human nature. Critical references to black artists as natural performers were a logical extension of this line of thought. Reviews of this type occurred with predictable regularity and emphasized the performers’ exotic differences from the Anglo-Saxon norm. [...] The idea [of] natural performers was closely related to the Exotic Primitive and Local Color Negro stereotypes. It portrayed black dancers as purveyors of atavistic impulses that resulted in a kind of effortless, unconscious expressiveness. Consequently, their work could be referred to as sociological rather than an artistic phenomenon.

When terms such as ‘natural’ or ‘nature’, with their primitive associations, are used to describe African American dance genres, this ideology once again stereotypes and pigeonholes their ability to be considered as serious artists and places them in a permanently subordinate position to white American dancers. To counteract these patronising perceptions, some African American dancers incorporated European forms of dance like ballet and contemporary dance to make their styles of dance more acceptable to Western theatre (Perpener, 2005:23; Foulkes, 2002:52). Some examples of this can be found in the early creative works by African American choreographers Charles Williams (1886–1978), Edna Guy (1907–1982) and Hemsley Winfield (1907–1934), who will also be

discussed in this chapter. The next section will provide a summary of their work in relation to how they used 'primitive dance' as a creative form of choreography.

3.3.1 Charles Williams (1886–1978)

Williams trained in physical education at Hampton Institute in Virginia, an all-black college, during the 1920s. There is little documentation of his dance training, although it is noted that he took dance classes at Harvard University Summer School and later attended the Bennington Summer School in 1937 and 1938 (Perpener, 2005:84-85). He was influenced by choreographer Ted Shawn, who visited the college with his wife Ruth St. Denis and their dance company Denishawn in 1925. It is ironic to note that this couple worked with Williams even though they were very discriminatory towards African Americans and the influence of jazz dance in society during the 1920s. Dance scholar Ann Daly documented Shawn's feelings, and cites:

In his 1926 book, *The American Ballet*, Ted Shawn, husband and partner to Ruth St. Denis, constructed an even more aggressively dismissive and self-conscious Africanism in order to validate his own vision for an "American" dance practice. To claim jazz as an American expression is a "lie", he wrote. "Jazz is the scum of the great boiling that is now going on, and the scum will be cleared off and the clear fluid underneath will be revealed." That clear fluid is the country's Anglo-Saxon heritage, wherein "our most interesting [thematic] material lies, and our most American material, if we consider ourselves as more truly American than the two alien races of the red man and the black man". (Daly, 2002b:219)

Shawn's disdainful comments demonstrate his ignorance and lack of historical knowledge – firstly, the origins of humankind are African and therefore were black, and secondly, the original American is in fact what he calls the 'red man', the Native American. Daly (2002a:215) further notes that "Shawn later went on to make dances with African-American themes".

Williams and Shawn developed a friendship and shared creative dance experiences from visits at the college over the years. In 1934 Williams founded the Creative Dance Group at Virginia's Hampton Institute, which successfully toured mainly African American colleges and audiences around the country during the 1930s and 1940s (DeFrantz, 1995:110). His dance styles were influenced by his African American heritage and he had a particular interest in 'negro spirituals'. He collaborated with a number of co-directors to work on various themes

and it is noted that he had a vibrant working relationship with Charlotte Moten Kennedy between 1936 to 1942. Kennedy also had a background and degree in physical education from the Boston University Sargent College, and she trained in dance at Bennington Summer School of Dance in the 1930s (Perpener, 2005:91). In New York in 1937, Williams' female student company, the Hampton Institute Creative Dance Group, performed Kennedy's "*Nobody Knows de Trouble I See, Calvary, and Get on Board Little Chillun*" (Manning, 2004:32, 40-41). Using photographs, dance scholar Susan Manning analyses the costumes and shapes the dancers form. She describes the tops as fitted, thus accentuating movements of the torso, accompanied by long swirly skirts. These costumes highlighted the broken movements of the arms and legs, which were influenced by the Bennington⁵ dances (Manning, 2004:41).

Dances from the African diaspora also inspired Williams to choreograph works with the male African students who attended the school (Perpener, 2005:87). Ordering the programme by theme was also important to Williams. He started with more modern or creative styles of dance themes, then ended with African-style dances, rather than starting with primitive themes and 'progressing' to modern themes. "It was as if the concert first demonstrated that Negro dancers were not limited to racially specific forms before celebrating the richness of those forms" (Manning, 2004:39). Perpener (2005:82) highlights how Williams' ideas "presaged those of Harlem Renaissance aestheticians who, a few years later, would speak of the importance of the African past in shaping contemporary African-American art and the function that art could serve in developing pride within the race as well as garnering approval from without". Williams' work demonstrated the diversity of African American dance genres whilst fusing these styles with modern dance forms that he learned and developed with Shawn. By touring and performing at many colleges during the 1930s and 1940s he was introducing new audiences to the diversity of pioneering African American creativity in concert dance.

⁵ The most prominent teachers at Bennington College from the early 1930s were modern dance pioneers Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm and Charles Weidman; their styles would have influenced any student who attended during this time (Hagood, 2008:23).

3.3.2 Edna Guy (1907–1982) and Hemsley Winfield (1907–1934)

Edna Guy was inspired to dance when she saw modern dance pioneer Ruth St. Denis perform in 1922 with “African American concert singers Roland Hayes and Paul Robeson” (Foulkes, 2003:24). Although she yearned to learn to dance, racial segregation and lack of funds prohibited her from joining classes, so she worked in various jobs including as a seamstress for St. Denis, who deducted her class fees from her pay (Foulkes, 2003:57). She was not invited to join the Denishawn Company because she was black, but on occasions she could perform in student concerts. Otherwise she accompanied St. Denis as her maid whilst on tour, and eventually the racial tension strained their relationship (Foulkes, 2003:58).

Hemsley Winfield studied and performed as a professional actor before entering dance and he trained with Russian dancer Mikhail Mordkin, who was a former Bolshoi and principal dancer with the Ballets Russes and co-founder of the American Ballet Theatre (Long 1989:23-25). Perpener (2005:x) cites that Winfield founded the “first African-American concert dance company”, the Bronze Ballet Plastique in 1925 and he was commended as a performer and a choreographer. Guy met Winfield and together they produced the First Negro Dance Recital in America (1931a), a concert which was “subtitled a programme of modern, primitive dances” (Manning, 2004:30). Manning (2004:32-34) documents the order of the performance: “The concert opened with dances on primitive themes [...] *Ritual*, [...] *Jungle Wedding* [...] Guy’s danced spirituals followed, placed almost exactly in the middle of the program [...]. The final section of the concert focused on modern themes [...] *Camp Meeting*, adapted from a play on southern life [...]”. It is important to note that Winfield and Guy’s programme order began with adaptations of African/primitive influenced dance forms and ended with spiritual/modern dances, in contrast to Williams’ company, who, as mentioned above, started with modern then finished with African dance themes. Winfield and Guy’s programme order suggested a progression of dance styles by the company from adaptations of African dances to spiritual/contemporary forms, providing an example of African Americans’ historic journey in dance. Manning (2004:35) cites dance critic John Martin’s (1931a) review of Guy and Winfield’s repertoire, which she evaluates as follows: “On the one hand, if Guy and Winfield staged themes perceived as racially specific, they

risked censure as limited artists, as natural performers revealing their innate gifts. On the other hand, if Guy and Winfield staged themes perceived as the preserve of white artists, they risked censure as derivative artists". Manning explains how Martin's perceptions of Guy's and Winfield's programme in this instance restricts African American dancers to being either pigeon-holed as natural performers or stigmatised as imitators.

Examples of repertoire that Winfield and Guy presented were evaluated in a 1933 conference chaired by Winfield and sculptor Augusta Savage, held at the New York headquarters of the Workers' Dance League, who were a strong civil rights advocate organisation (more about this organisation is discussed in Chapter Four). Winfield and Savage debated 'What Shall the Negro Dance About?' (Manning, 2004:57). Winfield opened the conference: "The Negro has primitive African material that he should never lose. The Negro has his work songs of the South which he alone can express. It's hard for me to say what the Negro should dance about. What has anyone to dance about?" (Winfield, [1933] 2004:57). (This conference is also discussed further in Chapter Four.) Winfield's description of dance styles identified that African Americans were choreographing within the parameters of limited themes and thus implied the need for a new creative direction. It is telling that Winfield uses the term 'primitive' to describe traditional African dance material.

Traditional African dance was also referred to as 'primitive movement' to describe the works of Sierra Leonean dancer, choreographer and musician Asadata Dafora. Dafora went to the USA in 1925, bringing a fusion style of traditional African dance with Western theatre. "Dafora's African dance consisted of vigorous movements, often at a rapid tempo, that included flatfooted stomping, isolated actions of hips, torso, and shoulders in rhythmic patterns, and bodies bent forward from the waist on deeply bent legs with protruding buttocks" (Foulkes, 2002:60). Foulkes refers to Dafora's choreographic style as one that "fit neatly into contemporary conceptions of white critics and audience members of so-called primitive and black peoples that exalted their closeness to nature, to animals, and to the basic functions of living – especially sex" (Foulkes, 2002:60). It is possible that some white

critics misinterpreted Dafora's choreography as primitive rather than as an adaptation of his cultural and traditional heritage. Yet dance historian Thomas DeFrantz (1995:111) states:

Though Dafora confirmed that great theatrical potential of West African dance for American audiences and African-American dancers, his success set in motion a critical formula which emphasized the exotic novelty of the black body on the concert stage. From this time on, black dancers became increasingly obliged to prove themselves as "Other" to the concert mainstream.

Even though Dafora brought his cultural/traditional dances to the United States of America, what did African American choreographers draw from these styles when representing traditional African-themed dances, especially when they were so distant from the continent? Perpener describes: "His unique contribution was that he changed the tradition by removing the dance from its ritual usage and shaping it to fit the priorities of a Western theatrical setting" (2005:127).

African American interpretations of African themes were documented in Winfield's description of his dance Jungle Wedding (1931), set "'...in Africa a long time ago'. Two 'native groups' engage in a ritual dance, 'a weird routine' accompanied by the 'barbaric' rhythm of tom-toms" (Winfield [1931] quoted in Manning 2004:32). There is no record of Winfield having visited Africa, although it could be argued he worked and was inspired by other African/African American artists to create his work. Perpener (2005:101) explains that "they did not have firsthand knowledge of African dance, however, [...] their choreography was based on expressions of their subjective feelings about African themes and subject matters". Manning (2004:9) also evaluates these works and explains that "in order to present their work, Edna Guy, Hemsley Winfield, Charles Williams and Asadata Dafora improvised within existing networks for Negro theatre, modern and leftist dance, and commercial theatre". When West African artists like Dafora represented traditional African dance and African American repertoire, similar to the way in which Winfield and Guy performed their interpretations of these themes, both dance styles were often categorised by white critics as 'primitive', thus reinforcing the stereotype, and pandered to Western notions of the 'exotic'. Perpener considers the continual artistic balancing act that African Americans faced when creating works with themes from the African diaspora for Western audiences when he states: "If they leaned too much toward the characteristics of black cultures that were most

appealing to majority Americans – visceral physical communication, the “exotic” excitement attached to forms that were, for the most part, non-Western, they were often accused of capitalizing on stereotypical images to woo white audiences” (Perpener 2005:23).

It was noted at the conference that African American dance should reflect the socio-cultural experience of those who practiced it (Manning, 2004:57). According to Perpener (2005:53), Winfield’s conference concluded that “the variety of approaches [...] to bring black performers into the mainstream of American theatre and dance reflected the self-searching quandary of Harlem Renaissance artists who struggled to find their identity in a world that was complex with racial issues”.

The Winfield and Savage conference demonstrates that African American dancers were questioning the cultural themes they performed and evaluated how they could expand their repertoire beyond the associated stereotypical genres. Furthermore, they aspired to gain respect for their art forms within white American dance culture. “Dancers wanted to take the essence of various black cultures into the American mainstream, but at the same time, they realized that majority America did not consider the material they used artistically valuable in its own right” (Perpener, 2005:23). However, “for white reviewers, African Americans’ natural dancing ability confirmed their closeness to so-called primitive societies, unsophistication, nature, bodies, and sex” (Foulkes, 2002:77). While white critics appeared to reinforce the stereotypical representation of African Americans and its associations with primitive culture and dance, pioneers like Winfield inspired to promote ‘black consciousness’ of their identity within concert dance.

Black dancers wanted their art to serve their individual aesthetic agendas; like black writers and intellectuals of the time, they adopted the underlying philosophy of the Harlem Renaissance: art should serve the specific social mission of changing how their people were perceived by the rest of the world. (Perpener, 2005:24)

Are black dancers today still stereotyped to perform specific racial vernacular forms or dances from the African diaspora? This question will be explored throughout the chapters and evaluated in the final conclusion.

3.4 Stereotyping 'primitive' dance

Whilst early documentation of African American dancers reveal that they were expected to perform only styles from the African diaspora on the professional stage, there is evidence to suggest that some choreographers used traditional African dance as an adaptation of 'primitive' dance to "woo their white audiences" (Perpener, 2005:23). For example, African American dancers like Josephine Baker performed interpretations of primitive dance forms, which were successfully received in nightclubs, especially in the northern states of America. Cultural studies scholar Michael Borshuk (2003:53) explains:

In Harlem nightclubs, for example, a voyeuristic economy informed by the cult of primitivism was repeatedly constructed between white patrons and the blacks in attendance. For whites, the black popular arts appeared to harness the "primitive" spirit of the Negro and offer an opportunity to acquire a version of the jungle without sacrificing white civility through the negotiation.

Although Borshuk refers to a nightclub rather than concert dance theatres such as the venues that are mentioned throughout this thesis, the concept of how black dancers were perceived in this environment by performing adaptations of African/'primitive' dance forms is important to explore, because it adds another perspective to how they were generalised and stereotyped. Borshuk refers to the satirical style of choreographed dances that artists like Baker and tap dancer Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson were known to perform. A summary of both of their lives in relation to performing in this satirical style will be examined below.

3.4.1 Josephine Baker (1906–1975)

Baker went to Paris in 1925 to escape racism, and made a prosperous career (DeLuzio, 2009:150). Foulkes (2002:71) highlights the exuberance of her performance: "On stage and off, Baker's playful embodiment of an erotic 'primitive' formed the foundation of her celebrity." In her early life she was known for her comical antics, cross-dressing and performing semi-nude on the stage. One of her renowned performances was the Fatou (1926) dance on the La Folie du Jour show, in which she wore a skirt made of bananas (Cheng, 2010:193). Historian Erin D. Chapman (2014:107) describes this performance as "an example of European primitivism and exploitation of black female bodies in the service of cultural imperialism". There are many sources describing Baker's artistic representation of primitive

dance on stage. English language and black studies scholar Stephanie Leigh Batiste (2012:9) states that “she exudes oversexed, primitive savagery and animalism in the service of colonial fantasies about blackness and at the same time the gorgeous desirability of an uncontained black difference”. Burt provides a similar account of Baker:

The ‘savage’ dances used the signs and forms of modernity to represent freedom from the puritan moralising of nineteenth-century bourgeois culture. [...] In 1925 the fear and fascination, the pleasure and disgust that her racial difference evoked for white Parisian audiences was undoubtedly a key factor in the success of the *Revue Nègre* and with it Baker’s ascent to stardom. (Burt, 1998:81)

Batiste and Burt both hold that representations of Baker were perceived as primitive, regarding the often-animalistic interpretations of her Eurocentric evolutionary origins. She was also sexualised and erotised by white audiences who racialised the difference ‘between self and other’ on the stage. However, Baker broke down some negative perceptions and revulsion towards the black female body through dance and therefore added desirability and exoticism to the art form. While it can be argued that Baker contributed to negative perceptions of black dancers and the black female body by performing stereotypical representations of primitive dance, some scholars contest that while her repertoire was “usually misunderstood [...] in her lifetime, as reinforcing the stereotype of the primitive, Baker was a ‘slippery signifier’ who, like many black minstrels, took the stereotypes to absurd levels in order to tear it apart and transcend it” (Fischer-Hornmung and Goeller, 2001:19).

Baker was a complex character. She was one of the best-paid artists in Europe; she was a dancer, singer and political activist, supporting the French in the Second World War. Aided by Attorney General Robert Kennedy, who arranged her visa, she attended the ‘March on Washington for jobs and freedom’ in August 1963 where civil rights activist Dr Martin Luther King Jr. presented his famous ‘I have a dream’ speech (Jules-Rosette, 2007:235). She also sought to show the world how to embrace cultural and religious diversity by adopting 12 children of different ethnicities with her fourth husband, the French orchestra leader Jo Bouillon, in the 1950s. The family were known as the ‘Rainbow Tribe’ (Rose, 1991:204/208; DeLuzio, 2009:150). Bearing in mind Fischer-Hornmung and Goeller’s analysis of Baker, some scholars have argued that she was a ‘double consciousness’ performer. Cinema

scholar Vicki Callahan (2010:113) notes that Baker performed doubly-conscious characters in films from the “late 1920s and mid-1930s”. She cites African American historian, sociologist and civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963), who developed the concept of double-consciousness when referring to perceptions of African Americans. He explains:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts. (Du Bois, [1903] 2000:2)

Callahan (2010:113) uses Du Bois's theory to describe the African American performer's perspective of double consciousness, which she interprets as: “[...the] bicultural origins of black Americans [...] The black condition [...] is to be in perpetual performance. And as performance always implies a viewer, it mobilizes a double-consciousness involving two subjectivities of consciousness, the viewer and the performer, in which both perspectives are maintained or internalized”. In contrast to Callahan's analysis of Du Bois, DeFrantz offers a similar explanation of double-consciousness when he cites anthropologist Roger Abrahams' work:

Performers in this tradition know that they may be playing to two audiences simultaneously —the black community and the white hipsters or weekend trippers [...] Black performers constantly recognize that the very performance that is conventional within the black community will be seen as strange, as pleasurable exotic to the hipster. Thus they operate out of a kind of double consciousness knowing that they are called upon to present an image which will be interpreted as exotic to the outside world and not to the black in the audience. (Abrahams quoted in DeFrantz, 2004:64)

Although double-consciousness in this section is discussed in relation to Baker's routines, do today's performers still go through this process when performing to the public? This question requires further research.

The effect of Baker's comedy also had a lasting influence on audiences' and critics' opinions of black dance and the sexualisation of the black female dancer/body. Manning (2004:30) notes that “black critics did not champion Negro dance for the simple reason that they associated theatrical dance with the virtuosic entertainment of Josephine Baker or Bill Robinson”. Baker and Robinson were often singled out amongst black critics because they performed racially stereotypical roles, although the tradition of mimicking and mocking was in fact inherited from slavery, as discussed above by Hinton (1988:4).

3.4.2 Bill Robinson (1878–1949)

Robinson, also known as Mr Bojangles, was a tap dancer and actor, and was one of the most well-paid black artists of his time. He danced with tap partner George Cooper before going solo in 1915 (Hill, 2010:63). He fused the Irish jig with African American social/vernacular dances like the catwalk, which brought him fame, and he performed in Broadway musicals and appeared in 12 Hollywood films as a stereotypical joyful, passive artist (Hill, 2010:65). He also starred as the leading character in the all-African American film Stormy Weather (1943) and featured in One Mile from Heaven (1937), an American film where he played a policeman, officer Joe Dudley (Marshall and Jean Stearns, 1994:183). He featured in four films with white child star Shirley Temple, who was just seven years old when she performed with Robinson in The Little Colonel (1935), becoming the first interracial tap dancers (Hill, 2010:122). Law scholar Brando Simeo Starkey (2015:143) describes some of the roles that Robinson performed. He “played bootlicking butlers and slaves who tap danced when called upon. [...] He played *Uncle Tom* roles, many blacks felt, and was personally derided often. Some called him an *Uncle Tom* for personifying stereotypes even when he was not being forced to by Hollywood executives”. The negative perception of an Uncle Tom character, a passive, black man who wants to appease his white boss by any means, was considered one of the most degrading representations of black people and seen as a ‘sellout’ to their community. Writer and producer Rebecca Carroll notes how the modern version of this character is portrayed: “black people (most often men) who negotiate with white people are frequently labeled ‘sellouts’ no matter what they are selling” (2006:3). Is a black man who works in a mainly white environment in today’s society, like former principal dancer of the Royal Ballet Carlos Acosta, a role model, or is he considered a sellout, depending on the roles he performs? Roles of black dancers in mainstream ballet companies will be discussed in Chapter Nine.

3.5 Early African American theorists on performing arts

Though Robinson portrayed racial stereotypes of black people, he fought against racism and contributed great amounts of his wealth to his community. He was even elected honorary mayor of Harlem by the people for his contributions in 1933 (Gates Jr. and West, 2002:151). Philosopher Alain Locke appreciated Robinson's talents, and while he notes that his dancing drew on African rhythms, he detested the racist caricatures that he portrayed (Gates Jr. and West, 2002:148; Gates Jr. and Molesworth, 2012:118; Thembanis, 2014:162-163). African American theorists like Locke and Du Bois appreciated spiritual dance themes because they reflected the suffering and oppression of African American people (Perron, 2001:25-26). However, Locke had different opinions on other styles of black dance, especially when it came to artists similar to Baker: "[He] considered the physicality – and sexuality – of the dancing in [...] shows to be uncultured and therefore had no place in *The New Negro*. Locke [...] excluded dance from *The New Negro*, which set the tone and outlined the scope of the Harlem Renaissance" (Perron, 2001:25-26).

Whilst Locke decided not to mention certain black dance forms in his book, it is important to note that Winfield utilised the term 'New Negro' to make his company more relevant to the age, and renamed his dance company from Bronze Ballet Plastique to the New Negro Art Theater Dance Group in the 1930s (Perron, 2001:26; Long, 1989:23). Dance historian Richard A. Long notes that the term 'New Negro' was developed by Jamaican political leader and Black Nationalist Marcus Garvey (1887–1940). It "had been in general currency since the early 1920s and had been consecrated in the title and the title essay of Alain Locke's compendium *The New Negro* in 1925" (Long, 1989:23). American studies scholar Gena Caponi-Tabery (2008:141) explains the viewpoint of black scholars during this time:

Black intellectuals wanted to distance themselves from Africa, believing that acknowledging this connection was a form of primitivism; that is, it reinforced a stereotype of African Americans as natural, primitive people. The error of this thinking, of course, was in presuming that African culture was primitive, in ignoring the sophistication of African culture and cultural aesthetics.

If African American dancers were not supported by some black critics or artists at the time because of their portrayal of primitive dance, their struggle for artistic recognition and

respectability within mainstream American dance culture would have been even more difficult.

3.6 The new African American dance aesthetic

Since the 1920s, African Americans adapted African/primitive styles of dance within a theatrical setting for audiences in three main ways: the doubly conscious satirical form, as explored with reference to Josephine Baker; the appropriations of traditional and African-themed dances as choreographed by Winfield and Guy; and finally, the misconceptions of Dafora's traditional style, which were often interpreted as primitive dance. Perpener (2005:18) illustrates the creative work of African Americans of this period:

Black dancers who became aware of the innovations in concert dance during the mid-1920s, began performing late in that decade, and gained wider visibility in the early 1930s had much to sort through in plotting their directions. [...] The tradition from which they felt the most pressing need to distance themselves [...] was the stereotypical neo-minstrel form of entertainment that was still associated with vaudeville and musical theatre.

Concert artists like Winfield, who questioned African American dancers on the representation of 'primitive' dances in their repertoire, as well as Guy and Williams, who along with Winfield staged a diverse range and adaptations of black dance forms for the stage, and Dafora, who created traditional African dances for the theatre, were amongst other dance innovators those who created the foundation for pioneers such as Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus. Dunham and Primus changed perceptions of adapting African and or 'primitive' dance and created a new appreciation for the cultural heritage and traditions of dances from the African diaspora. Caponi-Tabery (2008:141) notes that Dunham and Primus

overtly or obliquely challenged white cultural dominance through their dancing, and both relied on African traditions to do so. Infusing their contemporary artistic choreography with indigenous traditions, they, like jazz musicians and dancers, ran the risk of being called to task for confirming stereotypes or primitivist notions. But each was more concerned with art than with the opinions of the African American intellectual elite.

A summary of Dunham and Primus's work, regarding the concept and interpretations of primitive dance, will be explored below to evaluate how they helped to create a new appreciation for these dance genres in the American dance arena. These ideas will also be further explored in the next chapter.

3.6.1 Katherine Dunham (1909–2006)

There are many representations of Dunham's dancing life and this will be reflected throughout this thesis. This section gives an overview of her research on the significance of 'primitive' dance. Dunham was a dancer, choreographer and an anthropologist. Dance scholar Sally Banes (1998:154) notes: "In presenting her dancers as a method of anthropological research, Dunham signalled her desire to distance herself from earlier, overtly colonialist forms of staging the "primitive" at fairgrounds and dime museums. And she also distanced herself from "exotic" dancing in the contemporary sense – that is, lascivious dancing clubs". Banes' research implies that Dunham wanted no associations with African and or 'primitive' satirical dances like Baker had performed. She was an academic who was awarded a grant from the Rosenwald Fellowship in 1935 to travel to the Caribbean to study and document the 'primitive' emotional expression of their dances. She then went on to dramatise those repertoires for the stage and taught them to her company (Banes, 1998:154).

Dunham developed the theory and practice of primitive expression which "focuses on the rhythmic component and makes use of traditional dances, storytelling and singing to bring people together around a healing process which harnesses fundamental rhythms to increase the well-being of participants" (Schott-Billmann, xii:2014). Dunham was sometimes criticised for her dance technique, which involved isolations of the hips derived from her research, and these were seen as sexual movements on the stage. Scholars felt that this practice demeaned her academic status as an anthropologist, as Foulkes (2002:73) explains:

Reviewers slighted the seriousness of Dunham's academic study by continually using it to justify the sexy movements, while at the same time anthropology legitimated these so-called primitive movements in the sanctified realm of the theatre for white critics. In either case, as an anthropologist uncovering primitive dances or as a black woman rotating her hips, Dunham decidedly affirmed white critics' conceptions of all black peoples as inherently more sexual.

With Dunham's early professional ballet training, her knowledge of concert dance and her field research in the Caribbean, she developed a new highly trained and technically proficient dancing body for the African American aesthetic. Whilst she was criticised for utilising ritual dances in her repertoire because it challenged ideas of the primitive form of dance, she went

on to develop these ideas in an academic article, Interrelation of Form and Function in Primitive Dance, in 1941 (Aschenbrenner, 2002:250). Dunham's article implies that she was trying to develop an aesthetic rationale between the form and its perceptions with the actual function and meaning of the dances she observed. References to Dunham and her creativity in ballet will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

3.6.2 Pearl Primus (1919–1994)

Primus born in Trinidad in 1919, she was two years old when her family moved to New York (Emery, 1988:262). She was a dancer, choreographer and anthropologist who received the Rosenwald Fellowship, like Dunham, to travel and study traditional dance in West and Central Africa for eight months in 1949 (Schwartz and Schwartz, 2011:262). Whilst she studied traditional dances which were often referred to as primitive dances at the time, like those of Dafora and Dunham, Primus sourced original ethnographic dances from the African diaspora and set them in a theatrical context (Green, 2002:121). Foulkes (2002:77-78) highlights these pioneers' achievements:

Dafora, Dunham, and Primus enhanced the importance of dance when they stressed its function as ritual in African and Caribbean societies. In this they contributed to changing ideas of art in the 1930s, forcing a bleeding into the larger category of culture that emphasized the distinctive social grounding of values and beliefs. [...] They exposed the enduring constancy of race as a foundational element in structuring ideas of art and culture within modernism.

It is important to note that although artists such as Dunham and Primus were considered pioneers for incorporating 'primitive'/traditional African and Caribbean theme dances into their repertoire, some scholars opposed this fusion. For example, Lois Balcolm, a writer for the Dance Observer (1944), commented on Primus, as Foulkes noted:

"[She's] at her best when she is most Negro" and "[She's] at her worst in the primitives – just a modern dancer's approximation." [...] Balcolm [...] advised Primus to continue to explore the more "serious" avenue of modern dance, seeing neither "tribal ritual" nor "Harlem high spirits" as expressing the "things of most importance".
(Balcolm, 1944 quoted in Foulkes, 2002:75)

It is apparent from Balcolm's comments to Primus that he thought she should only perform African American concert dance forms, as he implies that studying and performing 'primitive' dance forms was of no worth. Foulkes' research documents how anthropologist Franz Boas'

daughter, the modern dancer Franziska Boas, also commented on African Americans' use of dance material from the African Diaspora. Foulkes (2002:75) notes that Boas

urged that African American dancer to steer clear of African and Caribbean dance material as it encouraged the "mistaken notion that this is the well-spring of his inspiration and he must return to it from time to time." Boas argued that black dancers needed to step beyond the folk-dance level and continue to explore the aesthetic principles of modern dance, thereby challenging the expectations of the white audience.

Foulkes (2002:75) summarises Balcolm and Boas' ideas and concludes:

If Boas and Balcolm illuminated some of the preconceptions of a pre-dominantly white audience, they also betrayed judgments about the difference between entertainment and art that haunted African American concert dancers. They believed African and Caribbean dancers ("folk dance," according to Boas) and "Harlem high spirits" lacked aesthetic elements; these judgements upheld distinctions between entertainment and art based on class and racial prejudices and often refracted in sexual terms through denigration of erotic appeal. They rejected Dunham's and Primus's attempts to imbue the popular dances with artistic intention – by choreographing, not improvising, them and by performing the numbers on stage alongside other kinds of choreography. Boas and Balcolm insisted on the superiority of the higher art form created and sustained by white critics and dancers as the path to pursue in breaking down the discrimination facing African American artists.

Foulkes' analysis of Balcolm and Boas' ideas on African Americans using dances from the African diaspora in their repertoire demonstrates that they had concerns about artists incorporating dance styles that were not considered or credited at the same level as modern dance in America. Similar concerns were explored in Winfield's conference 'What Shall the Negro Dance About?' (Manning, 2004:57), as described above. The conflict that African American artists encountered by performing adaptations of African/primitive style dances was in the context of how it was represented, whether by performing satirical dances like Baker and Robinson or by presenting interpretations of primitive/African dances as Guy, Winfield and Williams did. Their main concern was where to find the balance.

Pioneers like Dunham and Primus were able to establish African American dance as a form to be respected as part of the realm of American modern dance. The association of African American dancers with primitive and African dance forms not only derived from "nineteenth-century bourgeois culture", as described by Burt (1998:81), whose Eurocentric perceptions were based on evolutionary theories, as discussed in Chapter Two, but the concept also became embedded in the subconscious of African American scholars such as Alain Locke. Further investigations will evaluate whether the assumption that black dancers were only able to perform African or primitive dance styles still retains currency amongst white dance

practitioners today. This will be explored throughout the following chapters and analysed in the final conclusion.

3.7 Primitive modern dance

In the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, certain white dancers sought to break free from the constraints of ballet's hierarchy and technique, hence new modern dance forms were created based on the notion of freedom of expression. Dance scholar Rachel Fensham researched this era and found that it was "described as 'expressive' 'interpretative' or 'free', new performance genres found alternate to ballet and to the popular dances of music hall and vaudeville in the idea of the 'natural'" (2011:1). Aesthetic historian Katherine Everett Gilbert (1886–1952) also described this concept in dance:

The general spirit of the modern dance, being a "return to nature" and "common humanity," even a pavane or polonaise becomes through it recharged with our contemporary attitudes and with natural human sentiment. Again, abstraction in the sense of realization through bodily movement of space-relations is almost a stripping of human behaviour to its primitive dynamic elements. (Gilbert, [1941] 1983:301)

The idea of naturalism was similar to the 'natural' label attributed to African American performers (Cohen, 2001:5; Hanna, 1987:13). It is ironic to note that Gilbert's description of modern dance uses labels such as nature, natural and primitive in a positive, enlightening framework, in comparison to the derogatory meaning they had when associated with African American dance. Whilst the new concept of modern dance was 'going back to nature', this idea was a stereotype that African American dancers were trying to escape from, especially during the 1920s and 1930s – until dancers like Dunham and Primus established a new black aesthetic through representations of some traditional dance elements in their choreography. In contrast to the perceptions of African American dance forms being labelled 'primitive', as mentioned above, this section explores the concept of 'primitive' dance in the works of key modern pioneers Isadora Duncan (1877–1927), Ruth St. Denis (1879–1968) and Ted Shawn (1891–1972), and Martha Graham (1894–1991), to name but a few. A brief synopsis of their work, regarding how they used adaptations of the primitive or natural/nature, is provided below.

3.7.1 Isadora Duncan (1877–1927)

Duncan rejected the ‘unnatural’ technique and hierarchy of ballet and approached modern dance through a ‘nature’ perspective, with an interest in ancient Greek and concepts of beauty and goodness (Cohen, 2001:5). Daly (2002b:127) explains how Duncan combined these ideas as an artist: “By reflexively defining her artistic practice in opposition to ‘primitive’ modern dances, Duncan was effectively constructing the genre of American modern dances as whiteness. Duncan’s dancing body was not only natural, expressive, female, and political, but white as well”. It is evident from Daly’s research that Duncan’s attempts to express naturalism in her dance form were infused with a sense of whiteness and purity. Fensham (2011:2) explains that the concept of naturalism is complex and has been adapted according to how it is applied to its context. For example, “in artistic practices, culture identified with modern society was often regarded as corrupted while nature came to be regarded as pure” (Fensham, 2011:6). In another instance, Fensham also comments on modern dance and nature to reveal that “in the ideologies of ‘natural movement’ elaborated by modern dance practitioners, there is a sense that ‘nature’ represents a constant force; regarded as transcendently beautiful” (Fensham, 2011:3). The key concept of purity and beauty are aesthetic notions that Duncan had associated with herself within the hierarchy of whiteness, which is embedded in the institution of ballet itself, as mentioned in Chapter One. It is important to note how the influence of Eurocentric ideologies can change perceptions; for example, Fensham (2011:3) notes that “once this idea of Nature as a hierarchical order became established, dominant meanings for ‘nature’ evolved more abstract particularities”. Duncan reveals how she is against primitive associations, as mentioned by Daly (2002b:127); however, it is ironic that Fensham (2011:6) then describes nature as “that which belongs to so-called primitive society”. It can be argued that Duncan chose how she wanted to be perceived within the variant definitions of naturalism.

3.7.2 Ruth St. Denis (1879–1968) and Ted Shawn (1891–1972)

Dancers, choreographers and teachers St. Denis and Shawn “were interested in exotic genre pieces – evocations of various oriental, archaic and primitive styles, or what they

imagined these styles to be" (Jowitt, [1973] 1983:456). In contrast to Shawn's earlier expressions of disgust towards African Americans and their dance forms (Daly, 2002a:215), Jowitt's research illustrates how St. Denis and Shawn later embraced adaptations of 'primitive' themes in their work. They were inspired by spiritual and religious art forms, which led them to found the Denishawn Company and school in 1915. It was one of the first institutions to provide a universal education and training in different cultural forms (Hutchinson Guest, 1988:74; Thomas 1995:83). Shawn's encounter and friendship with African American Charles Williams at the Hampton Institute inspired his interest in creating repertoire with 'negro' themes such as Juba (1921), choreographed with plantation folk dances; Negro Spirituals (1933); and John Brown Sees the Glory (1933), about a white abolitionist (Perpener, 2005:89). As mentioned above by Jowitt, ([1973] 1983:456) adaptation of 'primitive' worldly dance genres formed part of Denishawn's concept of modern dance. It is important to note that Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman were dancers in the company, and went on to become the next key modern dance pioneers in the United States (Thomas, 1995:84).

3.7.3 Martha Graham (1894–1991)

Graham was a former dancer in the Denishawn Company and she founded the Martha Graham Dance Company in 1926. One of the main influences in Graham's career was training and performing different dance styles with the Denishawn Company from 1916 to 1923 (Perpener, 2005:8). Her work is documented as having been inspired by 'primitive' themes: performing arts scholar Sabine Sörgel (2007:151) notes that Graham "inspired modern dancers thus conceived of 'primitive culture' in terms of an exoticist mysticism rather than truly acknowledging its highly complex dance vocabulary". Examples of the technique she developed include her use of breath in movement, centring of the body, and focus on contraction and release (Desmond, 1997:246). Graham's musical director and dance composition teacher Louis Horst (1884–1964) noted the influence of 'primitive' themes in jazz dance and Graham's work. In his research, he explained that "jazz is a sort of popular primitivism, illustrating in its sensual moods, tempi and pulses the desire of our sophisticated and complex culture to return to the rhythm and body movements of a less civilized society"

(1961:111). It could be argued that by the tone of his comment, he does not regard jazz as having an aesthetic status comparable with modern dance. Horst also remarks on Graham's poses, calling them "'primitive' shapes that look remarkably like the preferred angular stances and impulses of then contemporary African American social dances" (Horst and Russell (1961) 2006:20). DeFrantz explains that "black dance gestures arrived in modern dance works through compositional techniques like those set forth by Horst as referents of primitive movement" (DeFrantz, 2006:20). However, Gottschild (1998:49) evaluates Horst's earlier description of 'primitive' dance and states:

It is important to remember that, beyond the "primitive" and jazz influences that Horst acknowledges, there are specifics that he does not discuss: the torso articulation so essential to modern dance; the legendary pelvic contraction coined as the signature statement in Graham's movement vocabulary; the barefoot dancers reifying contact with the earth [...] These particular components of the new Dance had no coordinates in European concert or folk dance traditions. Those traits live in African and African American dance forms, and postmodern dance received this wisdom from Africanist-inspired American vernacular and pop culture.

Gotschild implies that Graham's success was inspired by 'African and African American dance forms', whilst Sörgel (2007:151) suggests her achievement in dance was inspired from 'primitive' themes. Gottschild and Sörgel describe similar foundations of Graham's success attained from adaptations in non-white/'other' cultures.

Graham is renowned for creating many masterpieces, especially her early work Primitive Mysteries (1931) themed on Native American Indian culture and presented through abstract dance (Koritz, 1995:94). Burt evaluated this dance and wrote that:

[In] 'Primitive Mysteries' the existence of a Native American (if not a Catholic) referent is given emphasis. By explicitly naming the source of her inspiration, Graham was suggesting that she had a particular affinity with this particular group: that she as a modern American was primitive in ways that these native peoples were primitive.
(Burt, 1998:160)

If the basis of Graham's achievements were her technique and repertoire, which were created on interpretations of diverse 'primitive' dance themes, it is ironic to note that when many African American artists during this period also created 'primitive' themed dances, they were often criticised as mentioned above, when presenting their work. Manning (2004:10) further explores this idea:

If Negro dancers staged themes perceived as Africanist, then many white critics considered them "natural performers" rather than "creative artists" [...] if Negro dancers

staged themes perceived as Eurocentric, then many white critics considered them “derivative” rather than “original” artists. Yet the reverse did not hold, for white critics voiced no objections when modern dancers staged ethnic or primitive themes.

Manning highlights the creative advantages and disadvantages of producing primitive-themed work for both African American and white modern dance artists. For instance, African Americans such as Williams, Guy, Winfield and Dafora were generally stereotyped, whilst white artists such as Duncan, Denishawn and Graham were able to achieve successful recognition.

3.8 Primitivism in ballet

Joann Kealiinohomoku ([1970] 1993:533-549) debates the depiction of ballet as an ethnic dance form and deliberates on the ideology of primitivism in relation to ballet. While ballet’s origins have documented European influences, primitive themes in dance repertoire were also popular from as early as the turn of the nineteenth century. For example, Russian founder and director Sergei Diaghilev⁶ (1872–1929) of the Ballets Russes (1909–1929) incorporated many themes referring to the exoticism of the orient in his quest to find a new ballet and to modernise the genre (Garafola, 2009:50). Burt (1995:78) notes that “the exotic, Russian and ‘oriental’ settings of so many of the Ballets Russes productions accentuated the fact that the dancers were not entirely European, but in touch with the ‘primitive’ and ‘oriental’”. Diaghilev was motivated to change the early works of traditional Russian folk-themed dances mainly choreographed by the Russian Michael Fokine (1880–1942), who worked with the company from 1909 until his departure in 1912 (Greskovic, 2005:51-56). Although Fokine was acknowledged for his folk-themed repertoires, he also choreographed non-western works (as mentioned in Chapter One) like Cleopatra (Egyptian Nights, 1908); Schéhérazade (1910), an oriental ballet created based on a story from the Arabian

⁶ Whilst studying law at the University of St. Petersburg in 1890, Diaghilev became interested in social science, music and painting, largely due to the influence of his socialite friends (Garafola, 2009:150). He formed friendships and worked with modern artists such as the French painter/sculptor Henri Matisse (1869–1954), the Spanish painter Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) and the French painter André Derain (1880–1954), amongst others who were also inspired by ‘primitivism’ (Flam, 2003:29-35). Enthused by these artists, he sought to create a legacy as an artist through the Ballets Russes by incorporating various art forms on the stage. Dance critics Debra Craine and Judith Mackrell (2010:43) note that “Diaghilev’s artistic policy, which placed as much emphasis on original music and design as on choreography, changed the way ballet was viewed in the West; while the vibrant and exotic Oriental look of some of its early productions set fashion trends in the streets of Europe’s capitals”.

Thousand and One Nights; and Le Dieu Bleu (The Blue God, 1912), a ballet based on a mythical Hindu legend set in India (Greskovic, 2005:54-58).

After Fokine left the company in 1912, Diaghilev invited principal Polish dancer Vaslav Nijinsky⁷ (1889–1950), who was already performing with the company, to choreograph new ballets. Whilst working in the company, he developed an intimate relationship with Diaghilev and choreographed The Afternoon of a Faun (L'après-midi d'un faune, 1912) about a young faun that meets two nymphs in a dream; Jeux (1913), a dance with two women and a man playing a game of tennis; and The Rite of Spring (Le Sacre du printemps, 1913), a dance celebrating the arrival of spring through the sacrifice of a woman who dances to her death (Greskovic, 2005:56-57; Garafola, 2009:50-57). Burt (1995:91) notes that Nijinsky was motivated by French painter Paul Gauguin's (1848–1903) work, whose interest in primitivism led him to create works of art about the native Tahitians, who fascinated him with their "innocent freedom of social and sexual relations [...] In doing so Gauguin contributed to the European myth of the 'primitive'. To the western 'orientalist' imagination 'primitive' people were less inhibited about sexuality" (Burt, 1995:91). Burt (1995:91) explains that Gauguin's work influenced Nijinsky's choreographic work, for instance: "*Jeux* [...] was surely modern, inhibited social and sexual relationships. His other ballets at the time, *Faune* and *Sacré*, deal with similar themes and are both set in the 'primitive' and mythic or mythological past". Garafola (2009:57) provides a description of how Nijinsky's primitive and sexual themes were reflected in his choreography: "*Faune* went back to basics. The dancers walked and pivoted, inclined, knelt, and in a single instance jumped – movements that revealed the phylogeny of valet in these most primitivized signs of its steps". She also suggests that the sexual content of this ballet "brought fame and notoriety to Nijinsky, [...] because of the final masturbatory gesture, which outraged the guardians of Parisian morality" (Garafola, 2009:50; Bellow, 2013:50). Nijinsky's relationship and work with Ballets Russes ended in 1913 when Diaghilev discovered that he had married Romola de Pulszky, a Hungarian aristocrat's daughter, whilst on a tour to South America – he was furious and dismissed

⁷ Nijinsky studied dance with Russian ballet masters Nikolai and Sergei Legat at the Imperial Theatre School in St Petersburg from 1898 to 1907, and later joined the Ballets Russes in 1909 to become the leading male dancer, acknowledged for his strength, poise and giant leaps (Greskovic, 2005:52).

Nijinsky from his job (Lee, 2002:249). Nevertheless, Nijinsky's choreographic contribution to the Ballets Russes introduced a new modern ballet style based on 'primitivism', influenced by modern artists who also shared similar interests as the company was aligned with current artistic trends.

In the late 1920s, the Ballets Russes were to embark on a new style of ballet with a hint of jazz-inspired movements created by Russian dancer and choreographer George Balanchine (1904–1983), who was hired by Diaghilev in 1924 (Scholl, 1994:72). Balanchine's early training at the Imperial Ballet School, St Petersburg in 1913 and his music studies at Saint Petersburg Conservatory provided the grounding for his future success. His captivation by jazz dance developed whilst he was working in Paris in the 1920s with artists such as Josephine Baker. Dance historian and musicologist Marion Kant (2007:227) explains:

Balanchine became fascinated with jazz dance just as much as with classicism. [...] There is evidence that Balanchine not only choreographed for, danced with and admired Baker, but most importantly that the two traded material, with Baker learning to dance *en pointe* and Balanchine absorbing her jazz style.

In this instance, Balanchine merged European ballet and African American jazz dance. Whilst working at the Ballets Russes, Balanchine choreographed approximately nine ballets before the death of Diaghilev in Venice, Italy 1929 (Garafola, 2009:376; Craine and Mackrell, 2010:43). The influence of jazz movements in Balanchine's ballet Apollo (1928) was noted by Gottschild (1996:62): "He had sharpened his performance teeth during his apprenticeship in Europe during the Jazz Age of the 1920s. (Substitute 'Africanist' for the word 'jazz' and the focus of that era becomes clearer.) He had choreographed 'Apollo' [originally known as 'Apollon musagète'] (1928) for the Diaghilev Ballets Russes". Apollo was based on the mythological Greek god of music and his muse, and the music was composed by Russian Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), whose working collaboration would continue late into Balanchine's career. Dance scholar Barbara Fisher (2006:27) also notes Balanchine's jazz influence in the ballet and describes Apollo as having "breathtakingly combined classical ballet and classical Greek images with modern jazz". This ballet became the impetus for many of Balanchine's later works and was referred to as a creative turning point in his life (Gottschild, 1996:62; Kant, 2007:227; Taper, [1963]1996:98). Gottschild (1996:68-69) further notes that Apollo

advanced his credibility as an experientialist and innovator in rank with those in literature, music, and visual arts who also reached out to African, Asian, or Oceanic vocabularies to expand their creative options. [...] He appropriated Africanist conventions that were present in European popular performance, adapted them for use on the ballet stage, and imported (or exported) them to the United States where, with considerable additional input, he changed the face and shape of ballet.

More on Balanchine's inspiration to create work using 'Africanist' themes will be discussed in Chapters Five and Six. Through the above examples of ballet's incorporation of primitivism in Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, it is evident that Nijinsky and Balanchine's repertoire created success in a climate where artists of various genres also thrived by using non-western 'primitive' themed dances.

3.9 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to explore why dancers from the African diaspora were often associated with performing 'primitive' themed dances, with an emphasis on African American dance forms. Although the term 'primitive dance' can be considered a generic label for non-literate societies, the label was often applied to African Americans. Case studies on African American dance and its associations with primitive dance themes were given in this chapter in three categories: African Americans performing representations of African/primitive themed dances, as demonstrated by Williams, Guy and Winfield; the misrepresentation of traditional African dance as a primitive art form as demonstrated by Dafora; and finally, how African American dancers like Baker mimicked primitive-themed dances through the psychology of double consciousness, as described by W.E.B. Du Bois, hence imitating the cultural representation of 'oneself' (African Americans) for the entertainment of the dominant society. African American artists conflicted with the representation of their art form as performed as entertainment by artists like Baker and Robinson; however, as debated in Winfield and Savage's conference in 1933, they aspired for their art forms to attain high-art status within the white American dance arena. This status was eventually established by dance pioneers like Dunham and Pearl Primus, who were able to obtain respectability for what were once considered 'primitive' forms, and to present dances from the African diaspora on the stage.

The integration of 'primitive' dance themes and its relation to the natural environment and nature was extremely productive for modern dance pioneers such as Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, Martha Graham and others. These pioneers established new dance styles, created repertoire from non-western dance forms and paved the way for their own international success; however, there is little documentation or acknowledgement of their creative influences. The representation of 'primitive' dance themes in ballet was demonstrated through the example of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes company, and through innovators in new ballet such as the dancers/choreographers Vaslav Nijinsky and George Balanchine. Why is the representation of 'primitive' themed dances different when done by dancers of different races? It is clear that depictions of 'primitive' dance are controlled by Eurocentric perceptions, and thus are institutionally racist when critiquing African Americans for performing it. Reflecting further on these ideas, the next chapter, 'Dance critics on black dancers in ballet', will explore early representations of black dancers in ballet as documented by American and English dance critics.

CHAPTER FOUR

DANCE CRITICS AND BLACK DANCERS IN BALLET

Dance critical literature shapes and reflects the ideas and beliefs of the larger society.
(Deans, 2000:124)

4.0 Introduction

There is minimal literature documenting black dancers in ballet, as mentioned by dance scholar Christy Adair (1992:167) and discussed in the main introduction. One method used in this study to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how black dancers are perceived on the ballet stage was to research secondary resources, such as literature by dance critics in articles from national or international newspapers, which provide the foundation for this chapter. Many of the articles discovered were written by critics in the USA on African American dancers, dating from as early as the 1930s. One of the key dance critics who reported on their presence in ballet from the 1930s onwards was John Martin (1893–1985), a major journalist who wrote for The New York Times from 1927 to 1962. He was a key spokesperson for dance in the USA and “by the end of 1934, he was the undisputed voice of authority in the dance world and the only full-time dance critic on a daily newspaper in New York City” (Conner, 1997:109). Martin’s reviews will be analysed to evaluate how he documented black dancers in ballet, adding a critical perspective for public interpretations.

Critical discourse analysis of Martin’s reviews will reveal how black/African American dancers were perceived when performing ballet on stage. A historic overview of African Americans’ involvement in the ballet industry, starting from the 1930s, as per Martin’s reviews, will highlight the socio-cultural environment of their experience and the institutional racism they encountered. Using examples from African Americans documented in ballet, modern and concert genres, an overview of their achievements in dance history is explored, whilst examining the connections and similar socio-cultural experiences through each genre. This knowledge will also be developed to explore the wider perspectives of black dancers in ballet for this thesis.

4.1 John Martin, dance critic

In the early part of Martin's journalistic career, he wrote about dance styles, with particular reference to new concepts of modern dance, to communicate to his readership of "professional audiences,' [who] during this period were made up of dancers and other 'downtown' artists and intellectuals" (Conner, 1997:106). From 1934 to 1939 he lectured on dance history and criticism at Bennington⁸ School of the Dance in Vermont, USA (Manning, 2004:6-7). It is important to note that during the 1930s Martin worked with Louis Horst at the Bennington College and had similar ideas on modern dance (2006:64). As discussed in Chapter Three, Horst was Martha Graham's musical director and dance composition teacher. Gay Morris (2006:64) compares Martin and Horst's theories on modern dance: "Both sought to legitimize modern dance's place within modernism and to solidify its opposition to ballet, the traditional form which it had revolted. However, Martin's theory was far more developed than Horst's and less concerned with the craft of dance composition". Morris (2006:64) also notes that Martin "wrote important theoretical works in the 1930s that helped define the aims of modern dance. In the 1940s, he consolidated this theory and in the 1950s contributed an important study on contemporary ballet". The study he wrote was the World Book on Modern Ballet (1952)⁹ which demonstrates that "Martin had radically changed his view of ballet's likelihood of becoming an independent form. He had also become convinced that Balanchine was the choreographer to lead ballet towards that goal" (Morris, 2006:74). It is interesting to note Martin's attention to George Balanchine's pioneering work because both were interested and worked with African American dance genres. Whilst Martin reviewed African American performances, Balanchine worked and choreographed repertoire with them; this is discussed throughout this thesis. Martin's reviews will be evaluated here regarding their representations of African American dancers in ballet.

⁸ The school was founded by Martha Hill, a ballet and folk teacher who performed with the Martha Graham Company from 1929 to 1931. Hill and Mary Josephine Shelly, a physical educational teacher at New College, Columbia University Teachers College, founded the centre for modern dance styles. Dance scholar Thomas Hagood (2008:23) describes the program: "The Bennington dance program was responsible for introducing professional artistry and standards into the university dance curriculum. [...It] revolutionized dance in higher education in terms of teaching and instruction in performance, technique, composition, production, pedagogy and criticism". Hagood's description suggests that the Bennington dance program was very established and therefore Martin's involvement in teaching at the school demonstrates that he was at the forefront of what was known as a pioneering school for modern dance.

⁹ Martin wrote several significant dance books: The Modern Dance (1933), The Dance in Theory (1939), Introduction to the Dance (1939) and John Martin's Book of the Dance (1962).

4.2 Early racial integration in ballet – 1930s

The 1930s were years of segregation and the Great Depression, with high unemployment and low living conditions. 'Separate but equal' policies were active, especially in the southern states. These laws treated African Americans as second-class citizens, forcing all public facilities and places to be separate for black and white people (Long, 1987:33).

Unsurprisingly, few African American dancers were able to enter the ballet profession during the 1930s, because "American social restrictions served to inhibit any profound interaction between whites and Blacks [...ballet] was perceived by its audience to be Euro-classical and to be antipathetic to the presence of Blacks on stage" (Long, 1989:19). However, the socio-cultural environment was slowly beginning to change as African American dancers became more integrated in all-white dance companies. For example, in 1931 Martin reviewed husband and wife dancers/choreographers Senia Gluck Sandor and Felicia Sorel, (who also had a school named after Senia, known as the Gluck-Sandor dance school) and their production of Petrouchka (1911) at the Dance Centre in New York. African American Randolph Sawyer, a former student of the Gluck-Sandor dance school, where he trained in ballet and modern dance, was chosen to dance the role of the exotic Blackamoor with the all-white company (Perpener, 2005:69). It is important to note that currently there is no information on Sawyer's early life, and Perpener's research was transcribed from an "interview by Joe Nash, New York, Aug. 26, 1980, audiotapes in collection of Joe Nash" (2005:233).

Though Sawyer had no previous training before auditioning for the Gluck-Sandor dance school, he was inspired to dance as a teenager in New York when he saw Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn perform at Lewisohn Stadium (Perpener, 2005:69). After completing school, Sawyer performed with an all-male African American Company, the Bronze Ballet Plastique, founded by modern dance pioneer Hemsley Winfield who later changed the company name to the New Negro Art Theater Dance Group as discussed in Chapter Three (Perpener, 2005:43, 69; Perron, 2001:26). It could be argued that Winfield gave Sawyers some grounding in ballet, because he had trained with former Russian principal dance of the Ballets Russes, Mikhail Mordkin. However, Martin (1931b:4) gave a mixed review of his

performance in Petrouchka:

Again, though Randolph Sawyer dances the Blackamoor well, there is a suspicion that the role is less suitably filled by a Negro than it would be by some one pretending to be a Negro. In the Blackamoor's solo in the third scene, the choreography for the first time appears forced, for the simple reason that it is not racially differentiated from that of Petrouschka and the others. This necessity might not arise if Mr. Sawyer's talents did not equip him specifically to do a type of dance quite out of the range of his colleagues.

Martin's review of Sawyer's performance commends his performance on the one hand, yet on the other he implies that the demi-caractère¹⁰ role of the Blackamoor would be more suitable for someone portraying a 'negro', since the role is traditionally performed by a white dancer 'blacking-up'. It could be argued that if Petrouchka was created based on demi-caractères, the ethnicity of the dancer should not matter – the emphasis on interpreting the character should be the most important part of performing the role.

Another issue that Martin has with Sawyer's performance suggests that he struggles with the choreography and he queries his technical ability, again because he is a black dancer mimicking a black character. Martin seems to believe that a white dancer who was blacked-up would portray the role better. Hence, Martin compares Sawyer's ethnicity with the traditional racialisation of the Blackamoor demi-caractère and questions his aptness for performing the role, although this should not have affected how he executed the choreography. Petrouchka was originally created by Michel Fokine and performed by Sergei Diaghilev's Ballet Russes in 1911. Dance scholar Sally Banes (1998:69) notes that in Diaghilev's ballets "there were no blacks in his company, though there were Moors and slaves in his ballets played by whites in blackface"¹¹.

¹⁰ The "demi-caractère is a type of dancer or style of dancing in which academic technique is coloured by more dramatic or comic element of character" (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:127).

¹¹ The use of blackface in England dates back to the 1600s: this is evident in William Shakespeare's Othello (1604) in which the main character, a Moor, was played by actors who darkened their skin (Thompson 2001:115; Bhattacharyya 2007:76). The use of blackface in "minstrelsy remained an art of brief burlesque and comic relief throughout much of the 1830s" and through its development into minstrel shows during the 1840s became popular entertainment throughout the USA until the late 1970s (Lott 1993:73).

Dance scholar Julia Foulkes (2002:57) notes that the roles Sawyer performed were “suitable to his skin color”¹². Martin’s description of Sawyer’s role as a Blackamoor reveals racial concerns about the tradition of the demi-caractère role and the ethnicity of a dancer who performs it. Perpener similarly remarks on Martin’s review of Sawyer: “It seems that Martin had again fallen prey to his habit of becoming bogged down in racial issues to the point where clarity escaped him” (2005:70). Another dance scholar, Thomas De Frantz, also comments on Martin’s review and suggests that “audiences still couldn’t understand how that ‘type of dance’, implicated by the mere presence of Sawyer’s black body, could converse with ballet” (1996:110). DeFrantz further illustrates: “Although the abatement of strict segregation throughout the 1930s allowed some black dancers to perform in integrated groups, their presence triggered deep-set racial biases in audiences and critics” (1996:110). It could be argued that racism, partly led by a dance critic like Martin, meant that audiences were not ready to break free from tradition and were sceptical about accepting a black man performing ballet.

4.3 George Balanchine and early integrated work with African Americans

Though Martin had an impact on leading public opinion of black dancers in ballet, it is also important to note that in Paris in 1933, George Balanchine (co-founder, principal choreographer and artistic director of the New York City Ballet) was inspired to create an integrated ballet company before he travelled to the USA (Banes, 1994:59). A letter Balanchine wrote to funders of the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut shows that he requested to start a company with eight white boys and girls, and eight “negroes” (Banes, 1994:59). Banes notes that Balanchine’s dream of an integrated school and ballet company were inspired during his trips to Paris in the 1920s and 1930s. Her research

¹² Sawyer performed in several productions in which he was colour cast; for example, in 1933 he performed at the Metropolitan Opera in The Emperor Jones, a play about an African American man, Brutus Jones, who commits murder, is imprisoned and later escapes to a Caribbean island where he declares himself the emperor. Sawyers also danced the African Warrior role in a production of Kykunkor (The Witch Woman, 1934) at Unity Theatre, New York, by the pioneering dancer and artist Asadata Dafora from Sierra Leone (whose work was discussed in Chapter Three). Sawyer appeared in many of Dafora’s productions and performed with Katharine Dunham and Edna Guy to name but a few well-known (mainly African American) artists (Perpener, 2005:69-72). Considering some of the roles Sawyers performed, it is not surprising that he was considered ‘racially appropriate’ to perform a Blackamoor in Petrouchka, as Foulkes suggests.

highlights Balanchine's admiration for jazz music and black dance styles, which "he must have seen in Paris during the jazz-era twenties" (Banes, 1994:59). Whilst Balanchine was unable to achieve his dream of an integrated company in 1933, the following year he travelled to New York and founded the School of American Ballet (SAB) with co-founder Lincoln Kirstein, who went on to be co-director of NYCB. Kirstein also believed in Balanchine's dream of the social inclusion of African American dancers in ballet, stating that "the use of negroes in conjunction with white dancers, the replacement of an audience of snobs by a wide popular support are all a part of Balanchine's articulate program" (Kirstein quoted in Graff, 2001:319).

Balanchine worked with African Americans from the 1930s and beyond, including Josephine Baker, Katherine Dunham and the Nicholas Brothers, to mention a few artists. With Dunham and her company of dancers, he co-choreographed the all-black stage musical Cabin in the Sky (1940). The musical is based on the character Little Joe Jackson, a gambler who gets killed and is given a chance by God to redeem his soul (Perpener, 2005:144-145). Dunham performed the role of the seductress Georgia Brown who tries to steal Little Joe from his wife Petunia. Balanchine's collaboration and choreographic work with Dunham in 1940 was perceived by Martin as unusual. Martin reviewed the show and credits Dunham's performance, though he seems concerned about the choreographic collaboration:

Besides marking Miss Dunham's debut in a new field, it is George Balanchine's first venture in staging a complete Broadway production, and that is another item of more than passing interest. The combination is a curious one, but it bears fruit. There are numerous directors who have more knowledge of Negro dancing in their background, for the Georgia that is the birthplace of Balanchine happens to be not in the U.S.A. but in the U.S.S.R., but how many are there who would have had the intuition to use Miss Dunham and her group instead of the typical Harlem steppers. (Martin, 1940)

Martin's comments credits Balanchine, who directed and staged the production, although he notes that he is a Russian working with Dunham on an all-black musical. The collaboration of these well-known artists was unusual to Martin because of their different dance genres – ballet and African American concert dance – and the integration of these artists was not typical because of segregation laws at the time. Martin also implies that Balanchine needed to work with Dunham because the production required a white choreographer in order to produce an all-black musical. In fact, most of the choreography was improvised and

Balanchine “felt that there was no need for him as a white man to invent movements that were supposed to characterize Negroes” (Perpener 2005:145). Perpener (2005:146) and dance scholar Brenda Dixon Gottschild (1998:70) both note how Balanchine implied that ‘negro’ dancers improvised¹³ their dances with no prior training, although he needed to consider the choreographic process of inspiration. Dance scholar Joyce Aschenbrenner’s research found that Balanchine’s view “reflects the common view of African American movement as ‘natural’ to black dancers, as well as [a] situation that was not uncommon in Broadway shows at the time: black dancers choreographed numbers for which either white choreographers were credited or else no one was listed as choreographer” (2002:124-125). Dunham’s choreography was added because, according to dancer Talley Beatty, “the show’s producer, Martin Beck, was not pleased with Balanchine’s work and fired him before the production opened. Most of Balanchine’s choreography remained, but during previews Dunham added some of her own choreography to complete several scenes” (Perpener 2005:146). Aschenbrenner (2002:125) documented that “as Dunham remembered it, Balanchine gave her artistic freedom in the dance sequences and identified her as joint choreographer. [...] Throughout her professional career, Dunham experienced the lack of recognition with which many black artists have had to struggle”. Therefore, it can be considered from Aschenbrenner’s comments that Dunham was not publicly credited for her choreographic contributions in the musical Cabin in the Sky. Nevertheless, it is apparent that Balanchine respected Dunham as an artist, according to former dancer of the New York City Ballet, Arthur Mitchell: “Balanchine sometimes referred to Dunham in his work with students and sent dancers to study with her” (Gottschild (1998:77).

It could be argued that Balanchine’s collaboration with African American dancers in this musical did not add much value to the choreography because most of the movement, as he stated earlier, was improvised. Balanchine, on the other hand, seemed to have benefitted from the collaboration: as documented by Banes (1994:60) and Gottschild (1998:59-79), he

¹³ Dance scholar Jo Butterworth (2011:44) notes that improvisation is “about allowing the body to perform ‘movement without preplanning’ [...] our bodies are already constructed by our experiences in our formative years, our culture i.e. country, class, gender, age), by our personal philosophies and beliefs and by any previous training”. In Butterworth’s view, it is the life experience and training of dancers that initiates this creative process.

was undeniably inspired by African American culture, which influenced his own choreographic works. This will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

4.4 1930s – Black ballet companies

In contrast to Martin's critique of Sawyers in the 1930s and Balanchine's work with African Americans in concert dance genres, some of the first black ballet companies were also founded during that time. The following section explores how two African American ballet companies – Katherine Dunham's company, Ballet Nègre, and German dancer and choreographer Baron Eugene von Grona's company, American Negro Ballet – became established during this era.

4.4.1 Katherine Dunham, ballet and Ballet Nègre

As a comparison to Dunham's experience and associations with primitivism in dance, as discussed in Chapter Three, this section provides an overview of Dunham's early ballet training, which inspired her to create her own all-black ballet company. Dunham trained in ballet with Russian dancer Ludmilla Speranzeva, and the Americans Mark Turbyfill and Ruth Page, amongst others. A brief summary of how these teachers taught and supported Dunham's early career with training in ballet will be explored here.

The documentation on Dunham's teacher Ludmilla Speranzeva¹⁴ establishes that she was very supportive and encouraging of her dance career. Nevertheless, "because of such narrow views, Speranzeva prompted Dunham to focus on modern dance in her classes and develop her own style" (Aschenbrenner, 2002:27). Speranzeva's advice to Dunham suggests that the socio-cultural perception of black dancers in ballet, as discussed by dance critics Martin and Haskell in Chapter Three, held that each race should perform only their

¹⁴ There is very little information on Dunham's Russian teacher Ludmilla Speranzeva, though references note that she trained at the Chauve Souris Dance School (Aschenbrenner, 1998:140) and with the Russian ballerina Olga Preobrajenska (Lloyd, 1949:250). She was a member of the Russian Kemerny Theater (Aschenbrenner, 1998:140; Burt, 1998:2) and studied with German contemporary dance pioneer, Mary Wigman (Lloyd, 1949:250; Burt, 1998:2).

own dance genre. With this knowledge, she redirected her attention from the ballet profession and as suggested, she created 'her own style' of dance. Mark Turbyfill¹⁵ (1896–1990) was another very supportive teacher for Dunham: he not only taught ballet to her and other black dance students (Kuda, 2008:22), but he also helped her to create a ballet company. This will be explored further below. Ruth Page¹⁶ (1899–1991) was also one of Dunham's teachers who stated that Dunham should not become a ballet dancer because

she had started training too late to develop a “real talent” for classical ballet. Page also maintained that the “time was not yet ripe” for black ballet dancers [...]. She was referring to the fact that the dance establishment, as well as the public, did not believe that ballet was appropriate to the physique and gifts of black dancers.

(Aschenbrenner, 2002:27)

This brief overview of Dunham's teachers shows that she had a team of professional teachers that provided her with a full education in ballet. Although she was urged away from ballet, especially by Speranzeva and Page, because of the socio-cultural climate at the time, this did not deter Dunham from forming a dancing school in 1933. She taught “basic rhythms” associated with African American culture in a fusion with ballet to promising black middle-class students, with the assistance of friends Page and Turbyfill (Foulkes, 2002:56; Aschenbrenner, 2002:26-27; Conner, 2001: 28-30). However, she found that the “middle-class parents of the girls who were her potential students were not interested in ‘Negro’ culture, ironically, despite the views of the white cultural establishment concerning their limitations, her students’ parents identified with European cultural forms and preferred that their offspring learn ballet” (Aschenbrenner, 2002:26-27). Foulkes’ research found that the number of students attending Dunham's school were sometimes low, therefore she taught white students to help to cover her overhead costs (2002:56). It could be argued that the Harlem Renaissance inspired white dancers to learn the latest vernacular dance forms and therefore finding a teacher like Dunham to teach ‘basic rhythms’ led to increased interest in her classes.

¹⁵ There is also very little documentation on Dunham's American teacher Mark Turbyfill (1896–1990). He was a poet, dancer and artist. Historian Marie J. Kuda (2008:22) found that he studied with: “Andreas Pavley and Serge Oukrainsky, and he danced in the Chicago Grand Opera Company corps de ballet [...]. He studied in New York with Michel Fokine and later, 1924–26, became premier danseur with Chicago Allied Arts (under former Diaghilev star Adolph Bolm), the first full-fledged ballet company in the United States. [...] Turbyfill was often paired with Chicago legend Ruth Page in avant-garde productions”.

¹⁶ American Ruth Page (1899–1991) was a dancer and choreographer who trained and performed with Adolph Bolm, Russian ballet dancer and choreographer, in 1917 and in 1920 with Enrico Cecchetti. According to dance critics Debra Craine and Judith Mackrell (2010:338), she studied “modern dance with Harald Kreuzberg during the 1930s [...]. In her dancing career from 1918–1919 she performed with Anna Pavlova touring South America, she also danced with Ballet Russes in 1925 and in 1927 she performed with Metropolitan Opera Ballet in New York.

In 1930 Dunham founded the company Ballet Nègre with Turbyfill (Foulkes, 2002:56). Aschenbrenner (2002:27) notes that “the technique was basically balletic, and she named the group Ballet Nègre, indicating a kinship with the Ballet Russe”. Before establishing the company, Turbyfill had consulted dancer and choreographer Agnes de Mille, who was against his creating a black ballet company because she was concerned about the dancers’ ethnic appearance on stage overshadowing their talent (Foulkes, 2002:56). Dunham had problems trying to find dancers for the company in the beginning who would commit to the high levels of work that they expected from them (Aschenbrenner, 2002:27); nevertheless, the company was invited to perform at the Chicago Beaux Arts Ball in 1931 where they danced Dunham’s modern ballet, Negro Rhapsody. After the performance, receiving no other bookings or potential financial assistance, the company closed, ending the short life of one of the first African American ballet companies.

In 1933 Dunham appeared in Page’s La Guillablesse, “a folktale of love from Martinique and music by African American composer William Grant Still” (Foulkes, 2002:57). Dance critics Craine and Mackrell (2010:338) note that Page “was prima ballerina and ballet mistress at Chicago Summer Opera (1929–33) and choreographed *La Guillablesse* [...] which featured Page as the only white dancer in the company of 50 black dancers led by Katherine Dunham”. There is very little documented on this piece; nevertheless, dance scholar Joellen Meglin (2007:445) explains that this ballet “was in some ways left over from this period of foreign fantasy and primitive abstraction. It remains the most famous of Page’s quasi-anthropological choreographies because of Katherine Dunham’s performances in it and the eventual inclusion of the work in her own touring repertoire”. Whilst Dunham and the other black dancers were cast in Page’s folk ballet, was La Guillablesse successful because the theme was based in the Caribbean and the dancers were black? What role did Page perform in the ballet amongst the 50 African American dancers? Although there is little documented about this ballet, further research is required to answer these questions. Dunham continued her career as a dancer, choreographer and anthropologist, and she created her own dance form, the Dunham technique: a fusion of “African-based movements with ballet and modern

dance to liberate the knees and pelvis, fundamentally changing American dance” (Aschenbrenner, 2002:1). This chapter will discuss Dunham’s participation and representation in African American dance.

4.4.2 American Negro Ballet

Another African American ballet company during the 1930s was the American Negro Ballet, founded in 1937 by Baron Eugene von Grona, a German dancer and choreographer who trained with the German choreographer Mary Wigman before travelling to the USA. He was inspired to create the company due to the lack of opportunities for black dancers in the USA (Allen 1976:65). The company’s first performance was reviewed by Martin (1937:15):

The principals are a group of twenty-three young Negroes who have been studying for the last three years with Mr. Von Grona and have not previously appeared together in public. Not unnaturally, the performance partook considerably more of the nature of a pupils’ recital than an epoch-making new ballet organization. Much of the time, indeed, it was frankly inept.

It is apparent that Martin was not impressed with the company’s performance, as he suggests they were not experienced enough to be notable as a new professional company. Nonetheless, he commended some dancers and acknowledges the company’s potential:

Some of the young dancers show indications of talent, and many of them have profited by their training thus far in movements. When they have had more training and more experience and have provided themselves with choreography that is more worthy of their efforts they should make an interesting company. (Martin, 1937:15)

The company only lasted a year before closing due to lack of support (Allen, 1996:65).

Nevertheless, Von Grona’s efforts to create a black ballet company during the time of segregation in America was extremely courageous. It would be 32 more years before an African American ballet company would be accepted as equally professional and appreciated by the public, thanks to founder Arthur Mitchell and co-founder Karel Shook of the Dance Theatre of Harlem (Allen, 1976:66). More about these founders and the company will be discussed in Chapter Five.

4.5 1930s – African Americans and modern dance

Whilst there were fewer opportunities for black dancers to perform in ballet companies, mainstream modern dance companies slowly became more integrated from the 1930s

onwards and began to provide job openings for African American dancers to perform in the USA. Foulkes (2002:106-107) describes the political climate of the dance sector at the time: "In the late 1920s and 1930s radical political organizations embraced dance in the effort to use culture and art to serve working-class battles for better wages, conditions, and recognition". Whilst Foulkes offers a general perception of the socio-cultural environment at the time, Long (1989:19) explains the realities of employment for African American dancers: "In general, the modern dance was more hospitable to the idea of using Black dancers and Black material, in part because of its focus on the American scene and on social consciousness, in part because its audiences, concentrated in the Northeast, were more progressive and liberal". An example of an African American dancer who found work in modern dance companies was Allison Burroughs, who studied "music and movement at the Dalcroze Institute in Geneva" (Manning, 2004:71). Later in her career she performed with Jewish Communist dancer Edith Segal in Black and White at the 1930 International Women's Day in New York (Manning, 2004:71; Prickett, 1990:58). This performance was about uniting black and white workforces, and "the interracial dance exemplified one approach to the racial issue – the need to forge ideological links between African Americans and white workers against a common oppressor" (Prickett 1994:18). Dance scholar Susan Manning wrote that "in most performance contexts during 1930s, the homosocial bond between the dancers was read as exactly that – an affirmation of solidarity between representatives of black and white workers" (2004:70). It could be argued that when Segal changed the duet from female dancers to male dancers, casting African American Add Bates and Jewish dancer Hy Boris, the dynamics of the piece increased audience awareness of race, class and the potential unity of the working class. This idea is highlighted by dance scholar Susan Manning (2004:72) who also states that the change from a mixed duet to male dancers inspired the masculine workforce. However, dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster (2001:434) points out that "Segal saw the potential of the workers' struggle to bridge the black–white divide, and she succeeded in presenting an integrated cast on stage. Still, her dance subordinated racism to class-based forms of oppression". She goes on to explain that 'whiteness' and perceptions of the white body in modern dance had yet to be addressed, with reference to African Americans' place in the Western dance arena.

The dance was staged at various selected venues: as mentioned above, Segal was part of the leftist movement, therefore this dance was performed at “union halls and at political rallies and summer camps” (Manning, 2004:69). Manning (2004:73-74) wrote about the leftist critics, whose

reviews assume that the complex relation between casting and representation characteristic of metaphorical minstrelsy could reconcile the demands of revolutionary content and artistic form more effectively than the straightforward correspondence between casting and representation characteristic of interracialism.

Segal's dance had a profound effect on black and white workers because the dancers' ethnicities were reflective of the audience, the choreography represented the audience working and uniting, and the title of the piece also promoted integration. Manning also cites a review of this dance in the Daily Worker newspaper reporting “that only an alliance between black and white workers could challenge the twin evils of capitalism and racism” (2004:58). Much of Segal's repertoire consisted of black themes. However, she did not always work with black dancers and sometimes “staged white bodies referencing black subjects” (Manning, 2004:68). Segal's commitment to highlighting some of the inequalities that African Americans were experiencing by staging black-themed dances was part of her 'leftist dance' beliefs and her tendency to use dance as a “weapon in the revolutionary class struggle” (Manning, 2004:62). Segal was a pioneer in modern dance and a political activist who tried to increase the acceptance of African American dancers in companies by employing them. Her acts of integration may have only furthered African American prospects with other modern dance companies, but this was still more progressive than what ballet companies were doing at the time. Has this situation changed? Employment in dance genres will be explored throughout this thesis and evaluated in the final conclusion.

Foulkes' (2002:57) research describes the representation of African American's on stage and states that “in the most integrated productions in the early 1930s, African American dancers added authenticity with specifically identified black roles, but they were not used beyond those roles”. Whilst modern dance innovators were emerging, African American dancers were also pioneering black dance in the concert dance arena, inspired by the Harlem Renaissance. According to Perpener (2005:24): “Black dancers wanted their art to

serve their individual aesthetic agendas, like black writers and intellectuals of the time, they adopted the underlying philosophy of the Harlem Renaissance: art should serve the specific social mission of changing how their people were perceived by the rest of the world”.

The Harlem Renaissance inspired African American dance pioneers to create their own dance techniques and choreographic repertoire, thus striving for equal recognition to modern dance choreography pioneers like Martha Graham, Hanya Holm, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman (DeFrantz 2006:20). However, pioneers of African American dance struggled for recognition, since the genre had already been ‘tainted’ by earlier white American modern dance pioneers like Isadora Duncan (1900s), who was repelled by ‘Negro’ dancing and particularly by the vernacular dances that influenced American culture. For instance, as mentioned in Chapter Three, jazz music and dances like the Charleston were referred to as ‘primitive’ or ‘animal’ dances. Duncan referred to a need to maintain the whiteness of modern American dance (Daly, 1995:218-219). Husband and wife Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis shared similar views to Duncan at the time (Daly, 1995:219). However, as was also mentioned in Chapter Three, Shawn and St. Denis later created and adapted works with ethnic/African American themes (Daly, 2002:215).

Not all modern dance pioneers followed the examples of Duncan, Shawn or St. Denis, who tried to maintain whiteness within the genre. Other dancers such as Segal, Nadia Chilkovsky, Anna Sokolow and Miriam Blecher (Foulkes, 2002:107) were opposed to these views and formed the leftist Workers’ Dance League (later called the New Dance League) and united dance groups like the New Dance Group in 1932. It is important to note that in 1933 the New Dance Group Studios provided dance space for interracial groups (Graff, 1997:180). Perpener (2005:163) described the group as “the politically activist dance collective and studio that had been founded in 1932”. Garafola (2005:296) notes that Hemsley Winfield, as discussed in Chapter Three, founded the Modern Negro Group, which was also a member of the Workers’ Dance League. This group was influenced by the communist ideologies of German philosopher Karl Marx. His ideas were utilised by dancers to support the working-class struggle for equality, while also providing an umbrella platform for diverse groups (Foulkes, 2002:107). Manning explains that “modern dance addressed

members of the dissident middle class, an avant-garde elite, leftist dance addressed members of the cross-class alliance” (Manning, 2004:63).

The leftist Workers’ Dance League provided African Americans with a platform to perform and hold conferences, such as ‘What Shall the Negro Dance About?’ held on 1 October 1933 at their headquarters in New York (Manning, 2004:57), as mentioned in Chapter Three. After a few performances at the conference, including Segal’s Black and White, Winfield and the sculptor Augusta Savage led a discussion about the representation of black dancers’ repertoire, regarding primitive and African dance themes or work related to African Americans’ suffering racism and segregation in the southern United States. It was reported that dancer Add Bates and an unnamed female voiced their opinions, stating that the representation of ‘negro’ dance should symbolise the current socio-cultural environment (Manning, 2004:57).

Winfield’s presence at the conference helped inspire black dancers to question how they viewed their artistic talents and to value their place amongst mainstream American dance pioneers. His achievements at this conference were highlighted by Perpener (2005:53): “The variety of approaches he had used to bring black performers into the mainstream of American theatre and dance reflected the self-searching quandary of Harlem Renaissance artists who struggled to find their identity in a world that was complex with racial issues”. Winfield hoped that the black concert dance community would strive to achieve equal recognition to white modern dance pioneers in American culture. Perpener further explains that “what African-American dancers gained from modern dance was entrée into the new development in Western theatrical dance and the spirit of innovation that movement embraced” (2005:99). It could be argued that by theatricalising African American dance styles, they became more accepted as a genre of American modern dance.

4.6 1940s – Employment for African American dancers in ballet

Employment for African American dancers in ballet was almost non-existent until after the Second World War, and even then, very few dancers worked in key or feature roles. The

progression of African American dancers employed in ballet has been documented through Martin's reviews. In 1946 Balanchine and Lincoln formed the Ballet Society, where African American ballet dancers Betty Nichols and choreographer Talley Beatty were employed to perform feature roles. Nichols performed in Todd Bolender's ballet Zodica (1946) where she danced the role of Virgo, and in 1947 she performed with Talley Beatty as a 'Coloured Couple' in Lew Christensen's Blackface – a minstrel ballet that failed because of its racist connotations and minstrel-like choreography (Reynolds, 1977:79-81). Dance scholar Debra Hickenlooper Sowell (2014:237) comments that "the work was prompted by Lew's new consciousness of racial issues, an awareness sparked by his experiences in the army. Unfortunately, his choice of the minstrel show format as a vehicle for decrying racism backfired" (Sowell, 2014:237). The ballet was not critically praised, as Martin (1947: 25) states: "Blackface" is based on the old-time minstrel show, and, except for a thin line of comment on racial intolerance, is pretty pointless and long-drawn-out".

Christensen was not the only choreographer to use African American dancers in ballet repertoire at this time. For example, De Mille – who had earlier criticised Dunham and Turbyfill's idea of creating an all-black ballet company – went on to choreograph Black Ritual (Obeah) (1940) featuring an all-black cast of sixteen dancers for the 'Negro Wing' of the American Ballet Theatre School (DeFrantz, 2006:20). Martin (1940) reviewed the ballet and noted:

That her work does not build as steadily or to as great a climax as it might, is to be laid less to her composition than to her performers, for they are manifestly inexperienced and for all their serious effort cannot supply her with the inner concentration and nervous force that she asks of them.

While Martin commends De Mille's efforts to choreograph such a complex repertoire, he states that the demise of the piece was due to the inexperienced dancers, who were not sufficiently trained to comprehend the technical demands of her choreography. DeFrantz comments on Martin's review of this ballet and states that: "Critical reaction to the piece was muted, and the dance was considered unsuccessful, at least because, under De Mille's choreographic direction, the Negro dancers were not performing authentic Negro material" (DeFrantz, 2006:20). However, the dancers were not trained in African dance genres and neither was De Mille a choreographer of African-themed dances, therefore Black Ritual was

a ballet adaptation that was not appreciated because it failed to conform to the style of traditional forms of dances from the African diaspora – particularly when compared to Dafora's repertoire, which brought traditional representations of West African dance from his native country to the Western stage (DeFrantz, 1996:111).

4.7 1940s–1950s – Modern dance summary

Modern dance companies were beginning to open more permanent employment opportunities for African American dancers, encouraging integration. Examples of dancers who worked in mainstream companies during the late 1940s to 1950s include: Alvin Ailey, Talley Beatty, Janet Collins, Carmen de Lavallade and James Truitte, who were all members of the Lester Horton Dance Theater and who had all also studied ballet (Long, 1989: 126,143). Matt Turney and Mary Hinkson graduated from the University of Wisconsin where they majored in dance, then in 1951 joined the Martha Graham Dance Company and became principal dancers (Emery, 1988:317). In African American concert dance, Dunham opened her school in New York – the Katherine Dunham School of Dance (Aschenbrenner, 2002:233) – whilst dance pioneer Pearl Primus travelled to West Africa to learn dance in the 1940s. Since modern dance was opening up to more job opportunities for African Americans, prospects for dancers in ballet were also beginning to change during the 1950s.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that African American dancers like Dunham (1940) and Alvin Ailey (1958) created their own dance companies, and incorporated ballet as a key element of their dance technique and choreography. For example, DeFrantz (2002:146), who specialised in researching Ailey's repertoire, comments that:

In works he made for his own company, he incorporated ballet as a movement idiom equivalent to Horton, Dunham, and Graham techniques. This mixing allowed the company to remain inflected as "black," even as occasional balletic stances afforded it a visual currency with Europeanist forms of dance representation. Over time, the function of ballet technique in Ailey's work took center stage or moved back into the wings according to the dancers in the company.

Though integrated companies like Horton's and Ailey's were setting the trend by moving away from segregated exclusion of dancers through racialisation, it is important to mention

that all-black companies were largely established due to their marginalisation from the mainstream during this time.

4.7.1 1940s–1950s – Black ballet companies: summary

During the 1940–1950s, four African American ballet companies were established and documented: the First Negro Classic Ballet (1947); the Negro Dance Theatre (1953); The New York Negro Ballet (1954) and Capitol Ballet Company (1961). Although little is documented about these companies, considering the chronological history of this chapter, they are still important to mention to demonstrate the progression of black dancers in ballet.

The First Negro Classic Ballet (also known as the Hollywood Negro Ballet) was founded by German-born Joseph Rickard (1918–1994) in Los Angeles in 1947 (DeFrantz, 2002:321). Rickard had studied ballet and danced with the Ballets Russes. He also taught ballet to mainly black students, but due to insufficient funds the company closed in 1959. British-born Aubrey Hitchens founded an all-male Negro Dance Theatre in 1953 and “mixed ballet works set to Bach with dances to generic blues and jazz” (Hitchens cited in DeFrantz, 1996:111). African American dancers Ward Flemmyng and Thelma Hill founded The New York Negro Ballet (also known as Les Ballets Nègres and Ballet Americana) in 1954. The company toured Britain in 1957; however, after their return to the United States the company disbanded due to lack of funds in 1960 (Horwitz in DeFrantz, 2002:321). In 1961, the Capitol Ballet Company was founded by African Americans Doris Jones (1914–2006) and Claire Haywood (1920–1978) in Washington D.C. They had previously founded the Jones-Haywood Dance school for black children to learn ballet in 1941 (Long, 1989:120-121). The company ended in 1989 due to lack of funding; however, the school still operates today (Jones-Haywood Dance School, 2017 online). DeFrantz’s work can be used to summarise the aims of these companies, which were “formed with the express racist purpose of proving the ability of the black body to inhabit classical ballet technique” (1996:111). It is unfortunate that all-black ballet companies existed only for a short period and tended to disband due to lack of funding and public support at that time (Allen, 1976: 65-70).

4.8 1950s – African American ballet pioneers and the southern United States

As the employment of black dancers in modern companies slowly increased during the 1940s and 1950s, ballet too began to employ black dancers for small roles. The following section provides a summary of the employment of African Americans like Arthur Bell, Janet Collins, Raven Wilkinson and Arthur Mitchell in some of the major ballet companies. It explores their experiences of segregation and racism when performing, or being prohibited from performing in the southern states, which may have led them to end their careers with these companies.

4.8.1 Arthur Bell (1927–2004)

Before the 1950s, black dancers were not employed by major ballet companies. Arthur Bell became the first African American to perform a solo role with the New York City Ballet, formerly known as the Ballet Society, in the company's world premiere of Illuminations (1950) by British choreographer Frederick Ashton. Ashton was inspired to create the dance based on poems by French poet Arthur Rimbaud and was influenced by time spent in Africa (Macaulay, 2014 online; DeFrantz, 2000:182; Craine & Mackrell, 2010:228). Dance historian Nancy Reynolds (1977:111) cites Ashton's inspiration for this ballet with reference to Bell's role: "I think I was perhaps the first person to put a coloured boy on the ballet stage.' This was an allusion to Rimbaud's devoted Ethiopian servant, and it was also to suggest Rimbaud's African life". Whilst Bell was recognised as the first African American to perform as part of a major ballet company, the character he performed was nevertheless a subservient role. African American scholar Jessie Carney Smith (2013:13) notes that Bell "studied with Dunham in 1945 [and] performed the role of 'The Boy Possessed' in the Broadway show *Carib Song*, with Dunham as choreographer". He toured in Paris with Jacques d'Amboise and Beatty, then disappeared for forty years and was found homeless before being reunited with his family in 1998 (Yarley, 1998; Smith, 2013:13).

4.8.2 Janet Collins (1917–2003)

Some years later, Janet Collins became the first African American ballerina in the USA to perform with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet (the Met) from 1951 to 1954 (Emery, 1988:322). It is important to note that Collins also auditioned for a job with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1934 or 1935, but she was told they could not accept her because of the colour of her skin (Lewin, 2011:46). Collins was also told that “special parts would have to be created or her she would have to paint her face white” if they were to offer her a job (Emery, 1988:322). If Collins had accepted employment with the company, it is likely she would have had to portray a white dancer and merge into the *corps de ballet* like the rest of her colleagues or perform only special roles. Collins performed soloist roles in Zachary Solov’s production of Aida (1951) and Carmen (1952) at the Met (Lewin, 2011:189-192). Aida was composed by Giuseppe Verdi (1871), and is usually described as an ‘exotic African love story’ about an Ethiopian princess who is enslaved by the Egyptians and a military commander Radamès who falls in love with Aida, but the Pharaoh’s daughter Amneris is also in love with him (Fisher, 2000:26). As discussed in Chapter One, North African culture has had a clear influence on this ballet.

Carmen was composed by Georges Bizet (1875) and tells the story of a seductive gypsy who lures a soldier, Don José, to fall in love with her and desert the army, but she then leaves him for another man and Don José kills her in anger (Fisher 2000:5). It seems that Collins was colour-cast as the erotic, sexualised characters in both productions, as one review in The New York Times dedicated to Collins commented that “the exotic and brilliant character of ballet in opera seems to offer her a spectacular springboard” (Gilbert, 1953). Gilbert may have considered Collins’ ethnicity, as well as her technical aptitude, to be an advantage for performing the given roles. For example: “Dancers who could be categorized as performing “exotic” material (African- or Caribbean-derived dancer) or “local color” material (dancers using Negro spirituals, blues, and jazz) were usually accepted. When artists stepped outside these parameters, they were reminded that they were dabbling in areas where they should not venture” (Perpener 2005:21). Perpener’s statement suggests that Collins ventured outside her prescribed boundaries by performing ballet: because of her

ethnicity, Gilbert is racially categorising her by reminding readers of her 'exotic' talents. The roles of black dancers in ballet repertoire will be further discussed throughout this thesis, and will be assessed in the final conclusion.

Collins was often cited and applauded for her performance in Solov's productions. As Martin commented, "Miss Collins, of course, is magnificent – beautiful of body, technically superb and in every sense a dancer. Solov has choreographed for her admirably" (Martin, 1952). In 1952 the Met went on tour with Aida and Carmen for seven weeks to Canada and to selected American states. The company also toured the southern United States where segregation was particularly enforced, and Collins was not able to tour with the company. Journalist Howard Taurman (1952) reports: "Another member of the company, incidentally, who did not make the southern stops was Janet Collins, the Negro ballerina; she and the management agreed that it would avoid embarrassment for her if other dancers replaced her in "Aida" and "Carmen". Collins ended her contract with the Met in 1954 because she wanted to explore other opportunities in dance (Lewin, 2011:232). However, working in this major company may have dissuaded her from performing with other ballet companies because she was so often colour-cast.

4.8.3 Raven Wilkinson (1935–)

Another successful African American dancer active during the 1950s was Raven Wilkinson, who became the first African American to join the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1954, twenty years after Collins auditioned for the company (Anderson, 2010:223; Lewin, 2011:46). After extensive research, no reviews of Wilkinson's performances have been found. Lewin (2011:235) provides an overview of her career and states: "Wilkinson, who rose from the corps to become a soloist in her second season, would leave the company after six years due to the increase of racial incidents that did not let her tour the South". In 1967, she went to join the Dutch National Ballet for seven years before being "forced to retire and moved back home" (Bever, 2015 online). Wilkinson and Collins were both pioneers of their field by working in all-white mainstream ballet companies. Although they became professional

ballerinas, it is evident that racial discrimination in American society prevented their progression in the industry.

4.8.4 Arthur Mitchell (1938–)

In 1956 Arthur Mitchell, the founder and former artistic director of Dance Theatre of Harlem, was the first African American to become a principal dancer with the New York City Ballet (NYCB) (Maynard, 1970:52). Mitchell's first performance with NYCB was Western Symphony (1954), choreographed by Balanchine. This ballet was themed on the 'Old West', with cowboys and dance hall girls performing a fusion of ballet and American folk dance, with the street and saloons as backgrounds (NYCB, 2014 online). The performance was reviewed by Martin who reported: "A casting novelty and a debut was the appearance of the talented young Negro dancer, Arthur Mitchell, in the role usually danced by Jacques d'Amboise" (1955:40). Martin's comments on Balanchine casting Mitchell as a 'novelty' dancer could simply mean that Balanchine was straying from the prevailing practice by choosing a black dancer; on the other hand, it could suggest that Balanchine was courageous in his choice to cast a black dancer during the political climate of segregation. It could be argued that either way, the word 'novelty' in this example is problematic because it trivialises Mitchell's performance and implies that a black man performing in a white ballet company is merely amusing rather than a serious demonstration of talent. The word 'novelty' is used in many of Martin's articles, however: for example, 'Ballet: A Novelty Bows' (14 April 1960a) or 'City Ballet Gives Novelty Feature' (10 November 1960b) – it can mean 'newness' or 'originality' but it can also imply an 'unusual thing or occurrence' (Thompson, 1996:681). It is likely that the word 'novelty' was simply an everyday use of language at the time (Voss, 2013:54).

Another example of Martin's reviews of Mitchell's early performances was his debut of Balanchine's ballet Agon (1957), where he partnered Diana Adams (a white dancer) in a *pas de deux*. Martin (1957) comments: "Mitchell, an excellent dancer, has had his best chance to prove it in the new "Agon," in which he does a wonderful *pas de deux* with Diana Adams". In this example, Martin refers to Mitchell's efforts to prove he can perform the role. Why did Martin need to highlight Mitchell's ability to perform before congratulating him on his

performance? Mitchell was a classically trained dancer and he was chosen by Balanchine to perform in his company for his talents, just like the other cast members. Deans provides an explanation of how black people have had to prove their abilities in western societies, and this can be applied to Martin's comment: "African Americans always have an extra burden of proof concerning their ability to perform ballet because of their race. Moreover, this burden of proof is always of the highest standard" (Deans, 2000:124).

Mitchell, like dance pioneers Collins and Wilkinson, experienced restraints and prohibitions against performing in the southern United States. In 1965 Mitchell and Adams were due to perform Agon on television when it was reported that "television stations in the South would refuse to carry the show, and advertisers would not like that. This means quite simply that a prejudiced minority in this country has dictatorial power over what all Americans will be allowed to see" (Hughes, 1965:11). The performance was stopped because of the sexual and romantic physical interaction in the choreography. For example, Banes (1998:203) describes the *pas de deux* in detail:

He catches her, and as he lifts her, she opens her legs in a wide V. Then he lowers her and she collapses to the floor between his legs, folding up behind him like a jackknife and then opening her legs once again over the top half of her body as she lies on her back.

The interracial partnership of Mitchell and Adams would have enraged southerners and Mitchell's life could have been endangered, because black men were often lynched if seen making the mildest of sexual advances towards a white woman at the time (Segal, 1995:247). Banes (1998:196) comments on the racial partnering: "The ballet was contemporary and politically progressive in that during a period of intense struggle in the United States over civil rights, it unabashedly presented an erotic love duet between a black man and a white woman". She also refers to the "representation of the interracial coupling" and the portrayal of a "daring image" for NYCB audiences (Banes, 1998:197). Dance scholar Jennifer Homans (2011:421) also comments on this ballet: "The stark setting, black and white practice clothes, and distorted, sexually tinged but abstract movements stunned audiences". The following year he left the company in 1966 to pursue his career and later founded the Dance Theatre of Harlem with co-director Karl Shook in 1969 (Allen, 1976:66). More details about Mitchell's career are presented in the next chapter.

Segregation in the southern United States hindered African American dancers from performing, although dancers like Dunham fought against racism in the USA and found that “touring in a segregated society such as America’s presented problems she faced head on, from curtain speeches to segregated audiences to a staunch insistence on finding decent housing for her company” (Hill, 2002:291). One of the dances she choreographed, Southland (1950), was about lynchings, created on tour in South America, but she also experienced resistance to performing it in the USA (Osumare, 2016:310; DeFrantz, 2006:120). Like Dunham, Pearl Primus also choreographed dances with a political agenda, and her compositions were designed to draw attention to the inequities and injustices in the lives of African Americans. Primus’ Strange Fruit, for example, was motivated by the deep sentiments of a woman’s concerns about lynching (Emery, 1988:263). It was also based on Jewish writer and social activist Lewis Allan’s poem, also called “Strange Fruit “(DeFrantz, 2002:112). Primus also choreographed The Negro Speaks of Rivers (1944), a poem by African American Langston Hughes (Manning, 2004:170).

African American pioneers Collins and Mitchell were known by Martin for their talent and technical ability to perform ballets, and they made dance history as some of the first dancers to perform in and be employed by all-white mainstream companies. Yet racism and segregation were key factors in obstructing their progression towards becoming appreciated and respected dancers on the stage, equal to their white colleagues – especially in the southern United States.

4.9 Categorising the black dancer

Collins, Wilkinson and Mitchell had proved that African American dancers were talented and technically equipped to perform ballet at a professional level during the 1950s. However, in 1963, Martin discusses the issue of the black dancer contemplating the ballet profession and found that the ‘negro dancer’

has been wise enough not to be drawn into it, for its wholly European outlook, history and technical theory are alien to him culturally, temperamentally and anatomically. It is

an anthropological oversimplification, to be sure, to speak of such a thing as the Negro body, especially when one considered in Africa alone the contrast between the Watusi and the Pygmy. [...] In practice there is a racial constant, so to speak, in the proportions of the limbs and torso and the conformation of the feet, all of which affect body placement; in addition, the deliberately maintained erectness of the European dancer's spine is in marked contrast to the fluidity of the Negro dancer's, and the latter's natural concentration of movement in the pelvic region is similarly at odds with European usage. When the Negro takes on the style of the European, he succeeds only in being affected, just as the European dancer who attempts to dance like the Negro seems only gauche.
(Martin, [1963] 1970:178-179)

Martin categorises the differences between the 'negro' and European dancers' bodies and dance genres. It is perplexing that Martin links the 'negro anatomy' with African movement, when he had observed and reviewed over thirty years of African American dancers performing ballet with all-white companies. Perpener (2005:22) notes that "‘alien culture’ theory [...] provided a tidy rationale for placing black dancers outside the artistic mainstream: African Americans were ill prepared to engage in the serious dance genres of European-American art because the culture itself was foreign to them". Martin (1970:179) continues to explain and concludes that "the interchange of racial practices of moving is incompatible with subjective artistic processes, and even in large measure with imitative ones, if for no other reason than the differences in body structure". Consequently, Martin believed that neither race was able to perform the other's dance genre because of cultural differences and body structure, and implies that the 'negro body' was hindered when performing ballet, although his opinions on this subject were changeable:

To the above generalities, of course, there are exceptions, though they are surprisingly rare in view of history's longtime and steady intermingling of racial strains. In the very short period during which the American Negro dancer has been brought into practical contact with the academic ballet, there has been only one instance of the appearance of a Negro ballerina, beautifully equipped physically, technically and stylistically. This is Janet Collins [...]
(Martin, [1963] 1970:179)

Martin's appreciation of Collins' technical ability and talent overrides his ideas on the incompatibility of the 'negro' performing ballet, as he does not mention her body structure as something hindering her dance movements. He also mentions Randolph Sawyer's integration with the all-white company in 1931 and comments that "Sawyer was appropriately cast and irreplaceable" (Martin, 1970:180). Given his previous comments, Martin clearly thought that Collins, Sawyer and Mitchell were exceptions that proved his rule on the possibility of black dancers performing ballet.

4.9.1 Ernestine Stodelle

During the 1960s, dancer and writer Ernestine Stodelle, who performed with modern dance pioneers Humphrey, Weidman and José Limón, wrote dance reviews for The Haven Register (Cowan, 2014 online). She wrote an article that supports Martin's approach to categorising the differences between European and black dancers' movement with reference to their body structure: "The perfect classic Negro dancer is however a rarity due [to] the demands of European-dominated ballet technique. In ballet, there is an arbitrary and rigid code of proper style. That style happens to be white. African movement emphasizes, goes with, African structure" (Stodelle, 1968). Stodelle categorises dancers' ethnicities and associates their historical-cultural dance form with the appropriate dance genre, thus associates white dancers with ballet and black dancers with African dance. Consequently, she implies that black dancers in ballet would be misplaced and therefore generalises the black body as suited only to performing African dance forms.

To understand Stodelle's and Martin's racial comparisons and classification of dance genres and body structures, it is useful to use sociologist Kathryn Woodward's (1997:29) analysis of the "classificatory system [that] applies a principle of difference to a population in such a way as to be able to divide them and all their characteristics into at least two, opposing groups – us/them [...] self/other". It is also important to note that the origins of nineteenth-century classificatory systems were created to assist ethnographic museums in labelling 'other' ethnic objects (Hall, 1997:161). Gottschild's (2003:78) work can be used to further illustrate Stodelle's and Martin's racial classification: "Again the dance world seems not so much to democratically self-select but to dictatorially segregate by continuing to categorize along racial lines".

4.9.2 Arnold Haskell

British dance critic Arnold Haskell (1903–1980) wrote for the Australian Daily Telegraph in the 1930s, the British Dancing Times Magazine, and was appointed director of the Sadler's Wells School (1947–1965), which later became known as the Royal Ballet School. Haskell's

early opinions were similar to those of Americans Stodelle and Martin (Craine & Mackrell, 2010:209). In an article in Dancing Times (1930:455), Haskell compared black dancers performing ballet to white dancers performing the Charleston and 'black-bottom' dances of the 1920s. He wrote about the black dancers: "Imagine a performance of *Les Sylphides* danced by loose-limbed, 'coal-black mammies'! Such a thing seems utterly ridiculous [...] I am a great admirer of Negro dancing, but only when danced by Negroes" (Haskell, 1930:445). Consequently, Haskell believed that black dancers should only perform black vernacular dances, whilst white dancers should perform European genres. Burt (1998:63-64) comments on this article:

The imagined dangers of blurring the boundaries between individual or cultural identities, and of diluting racial purity are particularly pertinent to dancing. [...] Haskell's revulsion at the idea of loose-limbed black dancers performing *Les Sylphides* is founded on essentialist notions of racial identity, and fear of loss of distinctness that comes through the blurring of boundaries. [...] Because of the] instability of his own, white identity, he projects what he fears about himself onto the body of another, stereotypically conceived as 'other'. [...] He only sees colour and body types and cannot or will not realise that any one can do any movement vocabulary or style if given the appropriate training.

Dance critics like Haskell, Martin and writer Stodelle may have influenced public opinion through perpetuated and stereotypical images of black dancers by associating races with dance genres and therefore assuming an incompatibility between black dancers and ballet. Thirty years after Martin and Stodelle's comments on black dancers in ballet, dance and art critic John Gruen highlights that the same conversations were still in force: he remarks "that black dancers were not built along the rarefied lines required in classical dance. The assumption had always been that blacks could only excel in Afro-ethnic, Caribbean, jazz, tap, and modern dance" (Gruen, 1990:42-43). Perpener (2005:22) states that "whether conscious or unconscious, the tactical use of this idea had as much to do with sociopolitical motives as it did with the criticism of art". These issues of racial stereotyping and categorising, and the assumption that black dancers could or should perform only traditional or vernacular dance styles, will be explored throughout the coming chapters and evaluated in the final conclusion.

4.10 Other dance critics

Other dance critics had a more lenient view of black dancers performing on the stage; for example, “writers such as Edwin Denby and Margaret Lloyd seemed less susceptible to this type of thinking and more sympathetic toward black dancers who were trying to escape from stereotypical images” (Perpener, 2005:21). Denby wrote for Modern Music Magazine in the 1930s and The New York Herald Tribune in the early 1940s, and was a freelance writer from 1945 (Schmidt, 2013:107). In 1957, he reviewed Balanchine’s Agon and refers to the *pas de deux* between Adams and Mitchell, described above. He comments mainly on the movement vocabulary and only notes that “the fact that Miss Adams is white and Mr Mitchell Negro is neither stressed nor hidden; it adds to the interest” (Denby, 1957:451). The content of Denby’s review is focused on the choreography and the performance rather than the racial integration of the couple. Humanities scholar Tyler Schmidt (2013:107) comments on Denby’s review:

Such color-blind praise reflects Denby’s approach in much of his cultural criticism and more broadly the era’s of integrationist art. [...] As a critic, Denby was much less likely to comment directly on a dancer’s race. His approach to racial identity conformed at times to the limited vocabularies of the era, but he also searched for new language to describe the interiors of human experience.

More details about Balanchine’s ballet Agon and the racial perceptions of this performance is discussed in the next chapter. Another dance critic, Margaret Lloyd, who wrote for Christian Science Monitor, did not agree with the general stereotypical perceptions of African American dancers. Historian Mark Carnes (2005:355) notes that “in this era when writings about dancers tended to treat them as exotic creatures, Lloyd’s pragmatic view of her subjects as social beings was a major contribution to the field”. An example of Lloyd’s attitude when describing African American dancers is her description of Primus:

She is intensely Negro. Her skin gleams dark against the silver bracelets and dangling ear-rings she loves to wear. Her hair is a bush of black, which she delights in tying up in rutilant kerchiefs. Her big brown eyes, with their expanse of whites, look out from jungle distances. Her person recalls the far land of her remote ancestry. Her voice bespeaks the composed, college-bred American girl today.
(Lloyd, 1949:266)

Lloyd’s poetic description of Primus’ appearance is still arguably quite a stereotypical account, with obvious comparisons to primitive culture. Perhaps she was trying to draw out the connection between African culture and Primus’ work, whilst simultaneously

acknowledging her American background. However, in contrast to Carnes' description of Lloyd's work as 'pragmatic' and as a 'major contribution', Lloyd undeniably wrote stereotypical portrayals of African American artists, and as DeFrantz (2002:122) discussed, "Lloyd's focus on body parts and race reveal to what extent stereotypical depictions of the Negro had permeated into the social and individual unconscious". Critical perceptions of black dancers by dance writers and critics, especially about performing ballet, were deeply rooted in Eurocentric opinions of their body that assumed they were racially unsuitable to undertake the art form.

4.11 The deconstruction of the black dancing body in ballet

The black dancing body in ballet, as mentioned above, was not only categorised as only suitable to performing dance forms from the African diaspora, but it also became technically and aesthetically deconstructed. For example, dance critic Don McDonagh (1968:41-44) describes a Eurocentric perception of the black dancing body that had "tight joints, a natural turn-in rather than the desired ballet turn-out, hyper-extension of the knee [and] weak feet". He provides a generalised description of why this body was not structured to perform ballet, yet he describes a body type that could belong to any ethnic race. McDonagh's generalisation of the black dancer's feet is associated with the common stereotype of people from the African diaspora having flat feet. The position of the feet is often noted in African dance styles: "many European commentators on African people's dance have observed that Africans tend to dance flat-footed and from a crouching position" (Oyortey, 1995:193).

However, African dance scholar Alphonse Tiérou describes:

The placement of the foot on the ground. This technique, as old as the world, is one of the most difficult to master because it looks so simple. The art of dance lies in the manner in which the foot is placed flat on the ground and in which the body is given the necessary impulsion in order to obtain a precise movement. (Tiérou, 1989:69)

According to Tiérou, the position of the feet flat on the ground is in fact characteristic of how African dance is performed, as opposed to the misconception and generalisation that people from the African diaspora have flat feet. Responding to McDonagh's deconstruction of the black dancing body, Stuart Hall (1997:274) describes the process of 'de-familiarising' black people:

Since black people have so often been fixed, stereotypically, by the racialized gaze, it may have been tempting to refuse the complex emotions associated with 'looking'. However, this strategy makes elaborate play with 'looking', hoping by its very attention, to 'make it strange' – that is, to de-familiarize it and so make explicit what is hidden – its erotic dimensions.

Hall's description can be used to analyse the process of deconstructing the black dancing body with a 'fixed, stereotype racialised gaze' – in this instance, the gaze is the dance critic's perception. Hall's description of the 'erotic dimensions' can be used to associate the movement of the dancer's body, with a focus on the pelvis in African diaspora dance forms, recalling Martin's concern with the 'concentration of movement in the pelvic region' ([1963] 1970:178-179). Eurocentric perceptions have eroticised and sexualised the black body through colonial ideologies of dance and primitivism. Burt (1998:59) provides an example of these ideologies and explains that "Europeans have often projected sexual fantasies onto various colonised peoples who are supposed to be free of restrictive white, European codes of sexual morality. In terms either of supposed innocence, or greater sexual licence". Although the sexualisation of the black body in dance is evident, Gottschild's (2003:27) work can be used to explain the dominant constraints of 'white' power that allows negative perceptions of the black body. She clarifies:

The black dancing body has been scrutinized by the dominant culture through the lens and theory of difference. Naturally, the point of origin of any theory largely determines its outcome: differences in the dancing body of an oppressed people were occasionally valued but frequently scrutinized for signs of inferiority. In the white world, dancing bodies were measured against white ideals that ran counter to the aesthetic criteria of "inferior" Africanist cultures [...]. (Gotschild, 2003:27)

Representations of the black body, with reference to the key terminology used to assign eroticism, sexuality and primitivism, were explored in Chapters Two and Three.

The de-familiarisation of the black dancing body has been reinforced through media representation, and specifically through journalistic articles, over the decades. For example, British dance critic David Dougill's research highlights this issue. He found that "one difficulty which some teachers admit is that many black dancers do not possess an ideal physique for the special demands of classical ballet, though the build may be suited to other types of dance" (1986:44). From Dougill's investigation, it would be interesting to find out whether the teachers he interviewed had de-familiarised the black dancers' bodies due to their

Eurocentric ideologies, and had judged their suitability for certain dance styles based on this. This will be further examined in the final chapters.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Balanchine was influenced by the shape of the black dancer's body: a short torso and long legs (Gottschild, 1998:64-65). It could be argued that if Balanchine's ideal ballet body was created based on the black female body, then why is the black dancing body still criticised? The idea of a black dancer not possessing the right anatomy to perform ballet continues to be deliberated. For example, in an interview in The Guardian (2008), Cassa Pancho, director of Ballet Black, states that: "'ten or 15 years ago you'd hear that black women didn't have the physique for ballet,' she says. 'You'd hear "they have big bums and flat feet"'" (Somaiya, 2008:26). This topic was also recently discussed in 2012 by former principal dancer and founding member of Dance Theatre of Harlem, Virginia Johnson. She took over from founder Arthur Mitchell as the artistic director in 2009. Her opinion on the de-familiarisation of the black dancer in ballet is that:

There are [...] systemic aesthetic and political issues that contribute to the exclusion [of] blacks from ballet. One of them is no doubt the notion of an idealized body. This essential aspect of ballet has often been cited as a reason to exclude black dancers. It hardly needs to be stated how great a mistake it is to assume that one group is uniquely qualified and another uniquely unqualified [...] No thinking person would allow him or herself to indulge in these kinds of discrimination, but such prejudices persist below the level of thought. (Johnson, 2014 online)

Balanchine and Mitchell will be discussed further in the next chapter.

4.12 Conclusion

Research into Martin's reviews from the 1930s revealed that opportunities were gradually opening for African American dancers entering the ballet profession and that key roles in all-white companies were occasionally offered. Although Martin sometimes questioned their technical ability and racial suitability to performing ballet, he did praise the few black dancers that managed to break through to the highest professional levels to become principal dancers. Martin also had conflicting ideas, stating that black dancers had no place in ballet, but occasionally disproving his own theory when reviewing a handful of black ballet performances from this period. Some black dancers do possess the 'ideal' body for ballet at a professional level when given the opportunity, although there were few African American

pioneers, as mentioned in examples above: Rudolf Sawyer (1930s), Janet Collins (1950s), Raven Wilkinson (1950s), Carmen de Lavallade (1950s) and Arthur Mitchell (1950s–1960s), who have left their legacies for others to follow.

The representation of the black dancer on the ballet stage became culturally categorised with reference to the ethnicity and origins of the dancer, hence the idea that black dancers should perform African dance. This categorisation of the black dancer also contributed to the deconstruction of the black dancing body: dance critics and practitioners de-familiarised their anatomy, comparing it to the structural requirements of a ballet body based on a European aesthetic. These requirements were both imposed on and hindered the progression of the black dancer due to the embedded roots of institutional racism imposed by the socio-cultural environment. If the best dancers are employed regardless of the colour of their skin and if they offer their greatest performance, then why does the black dancer continue to be categorised and de-familiarised, as discussed by Pancho (2008) and Johnson (2012)? These questions will be explored in the following chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

STRIVING FOR EQUALITY IN THE WORLD OF BALLET: REPRESENTATIONS OF ARTHUR MITCHELL AND THE DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM

It doesn't matter what color you are. The question is: Who is the best dancer? I had to *show* that to the world rather than *tell* them about it. I said, "Let's put black classical dancers on the stage and let people see it!" (Mitchell quoted in Gruen, 1988:44)

5.0 Introduction

One may wonder why, in a study focusing on ballet among black British dancers, a chapter is devoted to the African American dancer Arthur Mitchell. Indeed, whilst I expected his history to provide some background information for my project, I did not anticipate that his name would come up again and again during my interviews and readings. His name is invoked for several reasons. Mitchell is seen as a success story: a dancer who entered the bastion of American ballet when joining the New York City Ballet. This was no small feat for any ballet dancer, but even more so for one of African descent. If that was not sufficient, he was also able to make the move from dancer to company director, setting up the very successful Dance Theatre of Harlem in 1969. He has therefore been a role model, and his company and school have been viewed as places to go for students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. One could argue that his influence has been both beneficial, in that he inspired black British dancers, but it may also have been detrimental in that it did not allow – or at least it slowed down – the development of a local infrastructure that would support black dancers in the United Kingdom.

This chapter engages with several issues. First, it outlines Arthur Mitchell's experience as a ballet dancer during segregation and his progression as a dancer from the 1950s onwards. Race and representation are key issues here, and will assist in evaluating Mitchell's experience and engagement with various social and aesthetic dance contexts. American modern dance culture will also be evaluated in relation to the integration of African American dancers into mainstream dance companies. Second, the roles in which George Balanchine cast Mitchell will be examined to evaluate whether ethnicity could have been a contributing

factor to his casting. Balanchine, the artistic director and choreographer of New York City Ballet, will be examined regarding his position on the integration of black dancers in ballet. The relationship between Balanchine and Mitchell will be explored, alongside the influence of black dance and music in Balanchine's ballets. Finally, this chapter will examine the creation of Arthur Mitchell's Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH), focusing on Mitchell's motivation for establishing his company during racial segregation. I will particularly investigate the company's British tours and the reception of the company's work in the UK, as this is at the root of my research.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to establish how political environments effected changes to issues of race and representation about Mitchell and his company DTH, and to ascertain the impact of his company on society, mainstream ballet and on the development of black dance in the UK. Therefore, historical and theoretical frameworks of dance, cultural studies and aesthetics are key components of this study.

5.1 Arthur Mitchell and the social climate of America

Arthur Mitchell was born in 1934 and raised in Harlem, New York. He trained at the New York High School of Performing Arts where he learnt jazz, ballet and modern dance styles. After graduating, he excelled in his career as a ballet dancer and was awarded a scholarship in 1952 to attend the School of the American Ballet, founded by the Russian George Balanchine and the American Lincoln Kirstein in 1934. In 1955 Mitchell joined the New York City Ballet (NYCB), becoming its first African American dancer to be permanently employed. He then worked his way through the company's ranks to become a principal dancer (Emery, 1988:279). Mitchell was very fortunate to gain employment with the NYCB at this time, as the social climate of America was still racially segregated and the post-civil war Jim Crow laws of 1875 were still in place¹⁷. During Mitchell's dancing career, these events would undoubtedly

¹⁷ 'Separate but equal' policies were still active, especially in the southern states. These laws treated African Americans as second-class citizens, forcing all public facilities and places to be separate for black and white people. For example, drinking fountains, toilets and restaurants were amongst the many segregated facilities (Long, 1987:33). Historian Jonathan Earle (2000:98) refers to these laws and states that "beginning in Tennessee in 1875, state after state pushed through hundreds of Jim Crow laws, separating blacks and whites on trains, in stations, and on ships. In 1883 (after the Supreme Court declared the 1875 Civil Rights Act unconstitutional) blacks were banned

have had an impact on his progression within the ballet profession, and his experience of equality and discrimination as an African American are explored below.

5.2 The integration of African American dancers into mainstream American modern dance

While segregation was still operating in the southern states, northern states were becoming more liberal and there was a willingness to integrate black dancers into mainstream modern dance companies. Cultural historian Richard A. Long (1989:19) has commented that “modern dance was more hospitable to the idea of using Black dancers and Black material, in part because of its focus on the American scene and on the social consciousness, part because of its audiences, concentrated in the Northeast, were more progressive and liberal”. Integration in modern dance was first documented when Edith Segal’s Black and White Workers Solidarity Dance (choreographed in 1928, as discussed in Chapter Four) was performed with African American Allison Burroughs in 1930 (Manning, 2004:71; Prickett, 1990:58).

Other dance pioneers who integrated black dancers into mainstream modern dance companies were Lester Horton and Martha Graham. The Lester Horton Dance Theater, founded in Los Angeles in 1946, was noted to be the most established integrated dance company. Dance writer and critic Jennifer Dunning (1989:48) wrote: “Horton’s company was the first established multiracial troupe in the country, and he resisted all suggestions that he split his dancers into segregated units”. Not only was Horton’s company integrated, but his dance technique was a fusion of Native American dance with modern jazz dance styles. Long (1989:126,143) notes that some of the African American dancers in the company included Alvin Ailey, Janet Collins, Katherine Dunham, Carmen de Lavallade and James

from white schools, theatres, and restaurants”. Whilst Jim Crow Laws were mainly in the southern states of America, many African Americans went to the northern states to escape the segregation and seek employment, which led to northern whites’ resentment and increased racial discrimination (Klarman, 2006:105). In 1954, the year before Mitchell joined the NYCB, movements towards desegregation were developing. For example, in the case of Brown v The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, the United States Supreme Court ruled that segregation in schools was “inherently illegal” (Segal, 1995:252). Desegregation in schools was a success, and this was the beginning of breaking down the barriers of inequality in America. Some citizens in the southern United States, however, opposed the ruling for desegregation in schools and in 1956 the Southern Manifesto was signed by 101 members of Congress to contest integration in public places (Long, 1987:86).

Truitte. Many of these dancers went on to perform with other dance companies, teach or form companies of their own. It is important to note that when Horton died in 1953, Ailey offered to assist the company briefly by teaching and choreographing several dance pieces for the company. This experience later inspired and prepared him to form his own company, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, in 1958 (Dunning, 1989:100).

The early 1950s also inspired Graham to integrate black dancers into her company. She had already employed Japanese dancer Yuriko (formally named Anemiya Kikuchi) in 1944 (Manning, 2004:140). She offered Matt Turney and Mary Hinkson the opportunity to join the Martha Graham Dance Company in 1951 who became principal dancers with the company and had major roles in Graham's repertoire (Emery, 1988:317). Turney was commended for her outstanding performance in Graham's classic Appalachian Spring (1944), in which she danced the role of the Pioneer Woman in 1958 (Dunning, 2009). Hinkson was highly praised for her performances in Canticle for Innocent Comedians (1952) and Ardent Song (1955) (Emery, 1988:316).

Long (1989:114) notes that Hinkson "was to become a quintessential Graham dancer, inheriting in later years many of Graham's own roles". Hinkson studied ballet with Karel Shook and made a guest appearance dancing with Mitchell in Balanchine's 1960 Figure in the Carpet with the NYCB (Emery, 1988:316). Other black dancers who later joined or performed in Graham's company include Ailey, Donald McKayle, Dudley Williams, Clive Thompson and William Louthier, amongst others (Manning, 2004:183). Louthier was also a dancer with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and moved to London in 1969, where he became a founding member of London Contemporary Dance Theatre, performing and teaching for many years with the company and the school (Meisner, 1998). Unfortunately, little is documented about his influences or achievements in modern dance culture in Britain, yet his name is often mentioned in interviews.

Manning (2004:183) explores the integration of black dance and the inclusion of African American dancers into mainstream modern dance companies at that time, and notes that:

“Token integration of modern dance and Negro dance in the postwar period coexisted with the forms’ racialized boundaries: as modern dance redefined its whiteness through mythic abstraction, Negro dance staged variations on the newly established convention of black self-representation”. She states that ‘token integration’ had revived modern dance with the incorporation of black dance material, which Manning refers to as ‘mythic abstractions’. “Both mythic abstraction and black self-representation allowed for the token integration of dance companies, and this token integration undermined the assumption about whiteness and blackness implicit in the representational consensus” (Manning, 2004:183). Manning concludes that the inclusion of African American performers into mainstream modern dance companies demonstrated how consciously liberal mainstream dance companies were. For three decades, African American dancers were integrated and/or employed into mainstream modern dance companies. They were established in nearly all forms of dance – except ballet.

5.3 George Balanchine’s integrated company dream

Balanchine viewed the United States as a multicultural society and he wanted a ballet company to reflect this environment. He thus considered forming an integrated company with Kirstein once he arrived in America (Banes, 1994:59). Dance scholar Sally Banes (1994:59) notes that: “Balanchine was already thinking of the U.S. as a blessedly racially mixed country, and he looked forward, according to Kirstein at the time, to establishing a ballet school and company”. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Balanchine wanted to create a mixed company Banes (1994:59). Balanchine’s dream of an integrated school and company never transpired, however. He did receive funding to travel to America in 1933, and in 1934 he opened the School of American Ballet with Kirstein, but it was not an integrated one, even though he arrived during the era known generally as the Harlem Renaissance.

This movement developed from the African American community, bringing together thriving artistic creativity with the influential sounds of New Orleans jazz music. The music flourished internationally, especially in Paris where colonial French-speaking African and Caribbean black artists lived (Earle, 2000:120). Earle (2000:120) wrote: “The confidence and creativity

of the Harlem Renaissance helped to rejuvenate entire ranges of American art in the 20th century. It also provided inspiration for generations of black and white artists, writers, and activists to come". It can be considered that Balanchine was inspired by the Harlem Renaissance and by the black dance styles of this era, and that he learned from the African American dancers that he worked with, thus introducing these movements into his choreography. Banes (1994:60) notes that "Balanchine borrowed heavily from black tap and jazz dancing, the reigning dance styles of both white and black Broadway musicals since the smash all-black musicals of the early 1920s". Balanchine worked with and choreographed dances for amongst others Josephine Baker, tap dancers Herbert Harper, Fayard and Harold Nicholas (the Nicholas Brothers), and Katherine Dunham. Balanchine's love of jazz and films had influenced him before he left the USSR (Banes, 1994:56; Gottschild, 1998:67).

5.4 Arthur Mitchell and George Balanchine

Balanchine hired Mitchell, an African American dancer, because he was talented. It seems, however, that his employment led to resentment by dance practitioners at the time. Long's (1989:19) research found that ballet "was perceived by its audience to be Euro-classical and to be antipathetic to the presence of Blacks on stage". These views did not hinder Balanchine's or Kirstein's employment of Mitchell, yet public critiques may have made them apprehensive about hiring African American dancers full-time in the past. Kirstein (1978:171) comments on an incident when Mitchell first attended the school: "When Arthur Mitchell first came to our school nearly twenty years before, a furious father full of antebellum prejudice threatened to withdraw his (pink-gray, ungifted) daughter if this (black, gifted) boy was allowed to handle her in adagio class". Nevertheless, Balanchine was imperious to people's objections and he was adamant in his decision to employ Mitchell regardless of social hostility at the time. He said in an interview with John Gruen (1976:444): "When I took Arthur [Mitchell] there were many objections. People said, 'What are you going to do with him? He is black.' I said, 'He will dance'". Despite initial objections, Mitchell performed in the company's *corps de ballet*. Martin (1955:40) reported in The New York Times on Mitchell's first performance in Balanchine's Western Symphony (1954), as mentioned in Chapter Four.

Balanchine created special roles for him to perform in his ballet repertoire, and some of these roles will now be analysed with reference to the ballet narrative in order to consider whether Mitchell's ethnicity was a contributing factor to Balanchine's casting.

5.4.1 Race and representation in Agon

In 1957 Balanchine created Agon, which was inspired by a series of seventeenth-century court dances (Kirstein, 1985:242). Agon is the Greek word for 'contest', which is ironic because there are many levels of discourse analysis to be examined in this ballet. For example, issues of race and representation present binary oppositions that in this ballet can be seen from different analytical perspectives. From an artistic perspective, binary oppositions are represented in Balanchine's selection of costumes, which the dancers wore according to their gender. For example, the women wear black leotards and the men wear white t-shirts with black tights. In the third section of Agon, a *pas de deux* was danced by Arthur Mitchell – a 'black' man – and Diana Adams – a 'white' woman, again showing how binary oppositions are operating on many levels.

Agon combines Igor Stravinsky's music with Balanchine's choreographic ballet-jazz rhythmical influences. Gottschild (1998:68-69) discusses Agon's influences as a fusion of black dance and music in Balanchine's ballets. In addition, she explains the importance of the 'jazz-Africanist' movement in this ballet: "This presence goes beyond surface characteristics such as movement vocabulary and is a significant subtext in Balanchine's work" (1998:70-71). Dance scholar Stephanie Jordan's (1993:1) research focused on Agon's "structural relationships between music and dance with the main focus on rhythm". It has been noted by dance scholar Clare Croft, that in Jordan's later works she observed jazz inspired movements in Balanchine's ballet: "Stephanie Jordon has written [that] the influence of African American jazz can be seen in *Agon*'s "jazz-style freedom," including the choreography's "slightly 'offbeat' phrasing" (2015:79). Gottschild (1998:70) described the 'jazz-Africanist inflected elements' that influenced this ballet:

The displacement and articulation of the hips, chest, pelvis, and shoulders, instead of vertical alignment of the torso; leg kicks, attacking the beat, instead of carefully placed

extensions; angular arms and flexed wrists, rather than the traditional, rounded *port de bras*, all of these touches usher the viewer into the discovery of the Africanist aesthetic in Balanchine.

Banes (1998:196) also acknowledged Agon's Africanist aesthetic: "Like Picasso and his contemporaries, in *Agon* Balanchine specifically borrows from an African-rooted aesthetic, introducing into the classical ballet vocabulary". Banes (1998:196) also comprehends the influence of jazz music in this ballet. However, dance critic Edwin Denby's (1986:461) review of Agon highlights that the rhythms, athleticism and energy of the ballet emphasise what has come to be defined as some of the 'jazz-Africanist' qualities, especially the use of "energy...like that of fifty dancers" (Denby, 1986:462). Gottschild (1998:71) also refers to the use of energy: "In European academic ballet, energy is subordinated to form; energy is measured and contained by form. In Africanist-inflected dance, form is subordinated to energy, and energy situates and determines form". Denby, Banes and Gottschild have all acknowledged the 'jazz Africanist' influence in Balanchine's choreography.

In the third section of Agon, Balanchine choreographed a *pas de deux* especially for Mitchell and Adams. Kirstein (1985:242) comments: "The grand *pas de deux*, one of Balanchine's most personal constructions, was designed for a white girl and a black boy". From one perspective, the partnering of Mitchell and Adams in the political climate of racial segregation was very perilous, but from another perspective it would seem a courageous casting decision by Balanchine. Gottschild (1998:64) notes that: "In a racially segregated world of pre-1970s United States, this pairing – specifically, the arch taboo of black and white female – was a near-revolutionary move, especially in the all-white, elite world of the ballet stage". As mentioned in Chapter Four, this ballet created racial tension during the time of segregation in America.

In 1962 Mitchell travelled to Moscow, Russia with the company. Kirstein reflect this moment: "In the Kremlin at the Place of Soviets, brilliant performance of *Agon*, with the crowd cheering Arthur Mitchell ("Meech-elle, Meech-elle")" (1978:170). It is evident from Kirstein's documentation that Mitchell's performance was appreciated, he continues to describe this event and notes: "In *Agon*, [...] Arthur Mitchell, our elegant black soloist, performed the

crucial *pas de deux*, cool as spring water in its dispassionately erotic acrobatics” (1978:170). The racialisation and sexualisation of Mitchell is consistent with the use of language at the time, as Kirstein (1978:171) documents a review of Agon: “In the Muscovite press, however, Balanchine’s expression of Stravinsky’s mutations of Mersenne and de Lauze’s Renaissance dances was interpreted as a Negro slave’s submission to the tyranny of an ardent white mistress”. In this example, it can be argued that binary oppositions and racialised discourse, as mentioned above in Hall (1997:243), are also operating in the Muscovite press, with ‘black’ represented by Mitchell as the ‘Negro slave’ and the ‘white mistress’ relating to Adams. Kirstein’s (1985:242) account of the submissive racialised discourse imagery concludes that “attention was drawn to an imagined servility and pathos, as a metaphor of inequality in American society; previously in the United States, the reaction had been the reverse”. Banes (1998:206) refers to Kirstein’s comments and argues that this imagery was part of Balanchine’s intention while choreographing this *pas de deux*:

Although Mitchell reports that Balanchine, instructing him in the role, said, “The girl is like a doll, you’re manipulating her, you must lead her,” in terms of gender coding of space, the man is often “brought low” – kneeling, lying down, or lunging – in his relationship to his mistress. She changes levels too, but maintains her impression of hauteur [...But] to interpret their duet as a metaphor for the man’s servility seems as reductive as seeing her as always manipulated.

There are many discourse interpretations of Balanchine’s ballet Agon as seen in Banes, the Muscovite press and Kirstein. Banes’ comments imply Adam’s ‘womanly’ servility and Mitchell’s ‘manly’ intentions, as she described above, which fit into readings of the typical gender roles of the man dominating the woman that recur through Balanchine’s choreography. The Muscovite press interpretation used the racialised imagery of a black slave seducing a white woman to heighten the controversy of the ballet, whilst Kirstein’s comment above highlights the racial inequality in America. The images portrayed in Agon emphasise racial inequalities on the one hand, but they also reinforce gender inequalities, which gave the ballet even greater impact. As discussed in Chapter Four, in 1965 Mitchell and Adams were due to perform Agon on television in the southern United States, but unfortunately the performance was stopped because of the sexual or romantic relationship the performance suggested through their physical intimacy (Hughes, 1965:11).

Issues of integration in Agon have been highlighted from two different perspectives: dance aesthetics and cultural representation. Dance aesthetics relate to the fusion and acknowledgement of black or 'jazz-Africanist' music and dance styles in Agon. Cultural representations, on the other hand, refer to the social perceptions of Mitchell and Adams' partnership on stage at the time of segregation. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Denby (1986:462) notes: "The fact that Miss Adams is white and Mr. Mitchell Negro is neither stressed nor hidden; it adds to the interest". Nevertheless, Balanchine did cast Mitchell for this ballet partly because of the colour of his skin, as was mentioned above by Kirstein. Dance critic Francis Mason (1991:395) interviewed Mitchell about his performance in Agon, and Mitchell explained: "There was definite use of the skin tones in terms of Diana being so pale and me being so dark, so that even the placing of the hands or the arms provided a color structure integrated in the choreographic one". According to Mitchell, Balanchine did cast him for this ballet because of his skin colour and his cultural knowledge of jazz-Africanist music and dance style. His intentions for casting Mitchell were not only for creating a dance aesthetic, but he also encouraged integration on the stage during a time of a segregated social environment. The use of contrasting skin tones will also be evaluated throughout this thesis and then summarised in the conclusion.

5.4.2 Mitchell's other roles

Mitchell was also commended for his performance in the role of 'Puck', a mischievous elf in Balanchine's A Midsummer Night's Dream (1962). On 13 April 1963, Mitchell was photographed in The New York Times from the chest upwards wearing minimal costume, looking semi-naked, to accompany dance critic Allen Hughes' review of his performance, in which he commented on his making "the show". Figure 1 shows the full costume that Mitchell wore (Thorpe, 1989:167).



Figure 1: Mitchell pictured performing Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Thorpe, 1989.

Dance critic Clive Barnes also reviewed this production for The New York Times on 9 April 1966 and noted that “Arthur Mitchell’s Puck, grinning, determined, forgetful and cheerfully and domestically at home in fairy-land [...] Puck is essential to Balanchine’s theme”. It is evident that Mitchell’s role as Puck was recognised by the press at the time and he was praised for his performance. Mitchell made references to this role, which required “quickness and speed”, and quotes Balanchine’s inspiration for the very minimal costume: “I want a costume where you become invisible with the tree trunk”. Mitchell explained: “I only wore this net. Then he added the little chiffon cloak to give it a sense of fleetness. Finally I took the ointment that you remove make up with – and outlined all the muscles of my body. [...] When I came out, he said, ‘Oh, that’s right. Now you look expensive’” (Mason 1991:395). In this production, Balanchine racialised Mitchell by casting him as a mischievous character, who was barely clothed and sometimes camouflaged amongst the trees, therefore implying that he belonged to ‘nature’ (as discussed in Chapter Four). For Balanchine, the colour of Mitchell’s skin and the nimbleness of this character was what he required for this role; however, there were also racially stereotyped implications for Mitchell’s performing this character in this way. Gottschild (1998:77) notes that “Balanchine was calculating how he could draw upon the energy and rhythms of the black dancing body. Of course, the primitive trope is at work here, with the concomitant allure of the exotic”. Gottschild’s comment implies that Balanchine’s use of the black dancing body emphasised exoticism, therefore when this image is applied to Mitchell’s character Puck, it is clear that he was sexualised by the

costume. Hall's (1997:263) theory can be used to illustrate this casting: "The problem is that blacks are trapped by the *binary structure* of the stereotype, which is split between two extreme opposites – and are obliged to *shuttle endlessly between them*, sometimes being represented as *both of them at the same time*". Using Hall's example, the representation of Mitchell performing the character Puck was 'childish', while his costume simultaneously eroticised his body.

When Mitchell portrayed a mischievous character, this could also be considered a racial stereotype. For example, Hall (1997:245) describes some eighteenth- and nineteenth-century perceptions: "Not only were blacks represented in terms of their characteristics. They were *reduced to their* essence. Laziness, simple fidelity, mindless 'cooning', trickery, childishness belonged to blacks as a race, as a species". Some of the stereotypes Hall describes are quite similar to the role of Puck: as humanities scholar Harold Bloom (2010:4) notes, "Puck, being the spirit of mischief, is both hobgoblin and "sweet Puck", but the role may be mischievous and childish, but the problem is choosing a black dancer for that role, which plays into stereotypes. Casting Mitchell as Puck suggests that Balanchine played into these racial stereotypes. Mitchell said during an interview with Mason (1991:395) that the: "Midsummer Night's Dream was interesting because logically people would have thought, since I was black and taller, that I would do Oberon and Eddie Villella would be Puck. But Balanchine reversed the roles". Although Mitchell wanted to perform the character of Oberon, who was king of the fairies, research shows that he never performed a character of royal status in any of Balanchine's ballets (Reynolds, 1977).

Mitchell was clearly colour cast by Balanchine in some roles, though his biography states: "Although on a few occasions, notably in Balanchine's *The Nutcracker* and Balanchine's *The Figure in the Carpet* Mitchell has been specifically cast as a Negro, his color generally plays no part in his assignment in the company's repertory" (Mitchell 1977 in Emery, 1988:279-280). Documentation of Mitchell's personal accounts are conflicting: if the roles mentioned above required a 'Negro' to perform the parts, and if other ballets did not racialise him, then why did he remark in his interview with Mason (1991:395) above about the importance of

skin tone in Balanchine's ballet Agon? Gottschild (1998:69) confirms observations of Balanchine's colour casting: "The visual value of skin color also played a part in other ballets, Midsummer Night's Dream (1962) and The Figure in the Carpet (1960)". In Balanchine's fairy tale The Nutcracker (1954), Mitchell performs the role of an 'Arabian Coffee' in Act Two, 'Land of the Sweets', and in The Figure in the Carpet (1960) he performed the blackamoor in a duet with Mary Hinkson (Reynolds, 1977:203; Asante, 1996:xvi). Mitchell was colour cast for these parts because both roles were 'black' characters. Banes comments on how Balanchine used black dancers in his company: "Often black dancers in his company like Mitchell and Mel Tomlinson¹⁸, although cast in many different types of roles, also played stereotyped roles, either exotic or nonhuman" (1998:69). Did Balanchine really start a revolution to integrate black dancers in ballet to perform some of these roles, or was he in fact continuing the Eurocentric racialised tradition of colour casting? Are today's black dancers still relegated by the directors to performing character roles in ballet? These questions will be further evaluated in Chapter Nine.

Dance scholar Jennifer Fisher (2003:158) describes the role of Arabian Coffee through research on various representations of The Nutcracker, and found that "far from being a dismissible, outmoded ethnocentric mistake – as many sensitive ballet observers fear – the 'Arabian' dance can be seen as an evolving attempt to imagine, recognise, and embody difference in an idiosyncratic way". The role of 'Arabian Coffee', which Mitchell performed, presents racial stereotypes of Arabs. Fisher refers to the traditional nature of this ballet and concludes: "It seems possible for even the most classical of ballet companies to take a closer look at their current 'Arabian' variation and start asking questions" (2003:159).

To summarise, there are many interpretations of how race and representation are at play in the roles Mitchell performed. Balanchine's racially stereotyped casting of Mitchell as Puck in A Midsummer Night's Dream, with his erotised costume and his performance of a

¹⁸ Mel Tomlinson (1954–) Started his training as a gymnast at high school. In 1972, he went to the University of North Carolina School of Dance to study modern dance and then ballet. In 1974 he joined DTH, rising to a soloist position (NC Natural and Cultural Resources, 2017 online). He then left to join Alvin Ailey's American Dance Theater from 1976 to 1978 and became a principal dancer (DeFrantz, 2006:116). In 1981, he joined the NYCB, becoming the second and only African American at the time in the company. He also became a soloist until 1987 when he left to dance with other dance companies (NC Natural and Cultural Resources, 2017 online).

mischievous or tricky character, offered a negative representation of African American men at that time. But when Balanchine cast Mitchell for Agon he racialised him on many levels: artistically, through the choreographic dynamics of the piece – a black man manipulating the movements of the white woman, Adams – he portrays an integrated partnership, which was not acceptable at that time. Aesthetically, Balanchine wanted contrasting skin tones, as mentioned by Mitchell. Earlier, Balanchine may have created the roles of Puck and the Blackamoor because colour casting Mitchell made sense to him and therefore he replicated images of black people or narrative characters who had similar skin tones to Mitchell, as in the example of The Nutcracker. Hall (1997:258) refers to this perception as a “part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order”. He describes this order as “symbolic boundaries [that] keep the categories ‘pure’, giving cultures their unique meaning and identity” (1997:236). Therefore, it would be unsurprising if, over time, Mitchell became disillusioned with the ‘racially stereotyped or racialised’ roles that he was performing and that this disillusionment led him to create his own ballet company. Adair (1992:170) also reiterates these concepts and notes that Mitchell “started the company partly because he was frustrated by the limited opportunities for him in ballet because he was black”. Was Mitchell’s decision to start his own African American company also influenced by the political climate at the time?

5.5 Activism and African American dancers

During the time that Mitchell was performing with the NYCB, civil rights activists were fighting against the Jim Crow laws and striving for equality. In the late 1960s a rise of militant black consciousness groups like the Black Panthers wanted to take aggressive action against racism in the United States. This group heightened awareness within the black community by promoting the ideology of Black Power and Black Pride (Segal, 1995:259) and by attempting to reverse negative perceptions of the black aesthetic with their ‘Black is Beautiful’ campaigns (Hall, 1997:272). This strand of black consciousness also encouraged separatism and inspired black people to set up their own businesses and become

independent from white America. Black separatism was simply a reaction to America's racial laws. When civil rights leader Malcolm X spoke about separatism, he said:

The white man has all of the businesses in the Negro community. He runs the politics of the Negro community. He controls all the civic organisations in the Negro community. This is a segregated community. We don't go for segregation. We go for separation. Separation is when you have your own. You control your own politics; you control your own society; you control your own everything. You have yours and you control yours; we have ours and we control ours. (Malcolm X, quoted in Parry, 1989:38-39)

The ideology of separatism filtered throughout the black community. However, African American dancers had already created all-black dance companies for the concert stage during the 1930s. Although these companies were not necessarily separatist, they were politically conscious artists fighting against racism through dance. What was also occurring in the arts at the time of the black resistance during the 1960s were many African American artists collaborating to form the Black Arts Movement,¹⁹ which was known as a second Harlem Renaissance (the first having occurred during the 1920s and 1930s (Hornsby, 2005:485), as discussed in Chapters Three and Four. African American dancers and choreographers also joined this alliance. Economics and American studies scholar Jaynes (2012:244) notes that "Alvin Ailey, Talley Beatty, Carmen De Lavallade, and Geoffrey Holder, fused elements of African, Afro-Caribbean and modern dance to create works that expressed pride in their African heritage. [...] Enduring everything from inferior dressing rooms to racist stereotyping and denunciation of their talent". Foulkes (2002:52) references other key African American dance pioneers also striving to present their cultural identity, and comments that "Hemsley Winfield, Edna Guy, Asadata Dafora, and Katherine Dunham trained and performed in the centre of these issues, forming racial, cultural, and national identities but contending first and always with racial discrimination".

¹⁹ Historian Alton Hornsby Jr. (2005:485) offers an overview of this organisation:

The Black Arts Movement refers to the period between 1960 and 1979, when black intellectuals began a call for a radical new state of black consciousness in the United States, and with a demand that black artistic production must reflect the black aesthetic. [...] In a period of rapid social change, it must be observed that the Black Arts Movement was also connected to the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement. [...] The Black Arts Movement can be viewed as the cultural struggle of blacks to seek freedom in America, just as the other movements sought to end American segregation, and the economic, social, and political oppression that blacks suffered in the twentieth-century America.

African American modern dance pioneers Dunham and Primus were politically conscious and made an impact on the perception of black dance as art form on stage. The dance L'Ag'Ya (1938) is an example of Dunham's work, "named for a Martinique fighting dance, [that] presented a variety of Caribbean dances" (Foulkes, 2002:69). Primus was a political activist: as mentioned in Chapter Four, she choreographed Southland (1951) created based on the lynchings in the southern United States and their effect on the black community (DeFrantz, 2006:120). She choreographed Strange Fruit, as mentioned in Chapter Four—also about a woman's reaction to a lynching in the southern states.

5.5.1 Alvin Ailey (1931–1989)

African American dancer and choreographer Alvin Ailey (1931–1989) was first inspired to dance when he saw Dunham's company perform. Dunning (1989:34-35) refers to Ailey's first encounter with dance: "The women who danced were beautiful. The men were big and virile and unlike any other male dancers he had ever seen. And they were black. They were all black". Watching the Dunham Company perform not only motivated Ailey to dance and become a member of the company, it also inspired his ambition to be recognised as an equal international artist in modern dance. During the 1950s Ailey attended artistic political activist meetings with the 'Negro in the Arts' organisation to discuss desegregation in the arts. Dunning (1989:88) explained that the group was "founded by Harlem-based writers and performers, [and that] the meetings occurred at a time when black performers were becoming more visible on the Broadway and concert dance stage". Whilst some black dancers and companies were in favour of separatism, others like Ailey encouraged integration. Ailey wanted to create opportunities for black dancers and represent black culture on the concert stage; however, he was also in favour of integration in dance, creating the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater as discussed above. His company offered a fusion of modern dance, such as Horton and Graham techniques, jazz, ballet and African dance components inspired by Dunham and Primus, with whom Ailey had trained and observed. The technical collaboration of dance styles was also represented by the integrated dance company members and "he maintained a steadfast allegiance to his integrated company and his freedom as an artist to evade the separatist demands of black nationalism. Ailey's

comments distanced him from a growing nationalist trend among black artists to define art politically by, for, and about black people” (DeFrantz, 2006:86). DeFrantz notes that Ailey’s integrated company influenced more audiences; however, his views affected prospective funding. He explains: “By 1969, the company’s fledgling African American audience base could not support its financial or critical needs” (DeFrantz, 2006:86).

Ailey and Mitchell had trained together with the ballet master Karel Shook at his dance studio Ballet Arts in the 1950s (Allen, 1976:66). They also performed together in Balanchine’s (1954) House of Flowers, an all-black musical (Long, 1989:83). Although both dancers wanted to be acknowledged as black artists performing on stage, the concepts of their companies were completely different. Ailey established an integrated company because he wanted “his organization as a model of racial harmony: ‘We consider ourselves a company of artists’, and color should be ‘an irrelevant factor in the world of dance’” (DeFrantz, 2006:86). He believed “the only way Modern Dance can survive is by broad offering of its works in its best form to a wide audience, [...] to provide education in dance, to disseminate information with regard to dance, illuminate the history of American Modern Dance, and to entertain” (DeFrantz, 2006:51). Therefore, Alvin Ailey’s American Dance Theatre was a fusion and representation of dance in America.

Mitchell was inspired by black racial equality organisations at the time and he worked with artists like “Louis Johnson, Alvin Ailey, Talley Beatty, Geoffrey Holder, and Garth Fagan [...] who were] formed by the ideology of the Black Arts Movement” (McCarty-Brown 408:2010). Mitchell was seeking the acceptance of African American dancers into a European established dance form. Therefore, it could be argued that he did not fulfil the Black Arts Movement criteria of establishing an acknowledged black art form within white American society because “art must reflect and support the Black Revolution, and any art that does not discuss and contribute to the revolution is invalid”. (Karenga quoted in McCarty-Brown 408:2010). On the other hand, was Mitchell’s intention to create a separatist ballet company, consistent with the Black Revolution’s criteria? This will be explored further in this chapter.

5.6 Creating the Dance Theatre of Harlem

After fifteen years of performing with the NYCB, Mitchell was at the peak of his profession. His dance career took him travelling all over the world and he was even sent by the US government to set up a ballet school in Brazil – the National Ballet Company of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro in 1967 (Maynard, 1970:52). In 1968 Mitchell was invited to teach ballet at the Harlem School of the Arts in a church community centre. This school was an arts education programme founded by African American soprano singer Dorothy Maynor (Long, 1989:153). His experience as a professional dancer, choreographer, teacher and cultural ambassador made him an ideal candidate for achieving his vision of a school and a company. Ten years after Ailey founded his company, Mitchell founded the Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) after hearing of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968. Though Mitchell was not the first dancer to create an all-black ballet company, many all-black ballet companies of the 1930s pre-DTH, as discussed in Chapter Four, existed only for a short period and tended to disband due to the lack of funding and public support at that time (Allen, 1976: 65-70).

Mitchell felt compelled to create a dance school and an all-black dance company due to historical events and the political climate, as mentioned above. He was a symbolic representative for African Americans in classical ballet and he wanted to change the world's perception of black dancers in ballet by demonstrating that they could perform ballet, as he had already proven. Mitchell sought to create training and performing opportunities for potential black dancers. He stated: "We have to prove that a black ballet school and a black ballet company are the equal of the best of their kind, anywhere in the world" (Maynard, 1970:52). However, Mitchell's idea for his school was integrated so that children from the street, of any ethnicity, could learn ballet. The aim of DTH's school was "to promote interest in and teach young black people the art of classical ballet, modern and ethnic dance" (Ghent, 1980:201). Mitchell describes his school as 'total theatre' because he wanted his students to learn all aspects of dance training and to learn what went on behind the stage (Maynard, 1970:53). Although Mitchell's school was integrated, his ballet company's vision reflects a separatist agenda. Adair (1992:170) researched Mitchell's views on integrating the

ballet company, writing that although “he has been asked many times to integrate the company he has decided to keep the company for black dancers until there are enough jobs available for them”.

Though Mitchell was inspired to create DTH after hearing about King’s assassination, Dr. King was not in favour of the type of separatism that Malcolm X promoted earlier in his career. However, Malcolm X’s views changed later when he converted to Islam and took a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1964, where he witnessed for the first time, people from different ethnicities uniting, praying together, and this experience changed his opinion on black separatism (Malcolm X, 1966:430). In Dr King’s 1963 ‘I have a dream speech’ in Washington D.C., King encouraged equality and integration (Long, 1987:98). Mitchell’s political incentive changed according to his objective, as described above: his school was inclusive and promoted integration; but due to the lack of job opportunities for black professional dancers in mainstream ballet, his ballet company was separatist, creating opportunities only for black ballet dancers. Adair (1992:170) noted that “certainly, having a black separatist ballet company has meant that black dancers have had the opportunity to perform and a good deal of prejudice has been challenged in the process”. Creating an all-black ballet company has enabled dancers to perform all roles in any repertoire without being colour cast, like Mitchell experienced when working with the all-white NYCB.

Mitchell acquired all the relevant resources to establish his dance school and company in Harlem, his home town. He stated: “It had to be Harlem, [...] the arts belong to the people and we must carry the arts to the people, not wait for the people to come to the arts. We are training black dancers for a black ballet. Where else would it be, if not in Harlem?” (Mitchell quoted in Maynard, 1970:53). As previously mentioned, Harlem had once been a source of creativity and innovation during the 1920s and 1930s during the Harlem Renaissance. Mitchell was born at the end of this era and it could be argued that the creativity of Harlem had a profound effect on him during his formative years. He taught ballet classes at the Harlem School of the Arts, which grew too large and he moved his classes to a disused three-storey garage that he refurbished with his own funds (with the help of Balanchine and

Kirstein, who assisted in obtaining further funds). Balanchine explained: "I have helped Arthur, and I have helped his company, even before foundations came along with grants" (Balanchine in Gruen, 1976:443). Considerable amounts of money for funding ballet were granted from the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Garafola (2005:329) explains that "the Ford Foundation subsidized the company's affiliated school, which functioned as both a neighbourhood arts centre and a professional training academy". Financially, Mitchell was extremely fortunate to find funds to support his school and company. He also benefitted from having Kirstein as the Chairman of the Board and Balanchine as the Vice President of his company (Maynard, 1970:53).

Mitchell recruited his former Dutch ballet teacher Karel Shook²⁰ (1920–1985) to become the co-founder and co-director of DTH in 1969. He taught many black students, famous dancers and choreographers including Mitchell, Ailey and Holder²¹. When Mitchell requested his help to form DTH, he was working as the ballet master for the Dutch National Ballet (Allen, 1976:66). In an interview with Allen (1976:66), Shook said: "I've been involved with and known black dancers since 1939 when I first met Sylvia Fort, throughout the time that I was dancing with the Ballet Russe in the '40s, and when I started to teach at the Dunham School in September '52". When Shook met Fort she was dancing with the Katherine Dunham Company, and he met her again at the Dunham School where she taught as a ballet mistress from 1947 to 1952 (Emery, 1988:305). In Allen's (1976:66) article, Shook lists all the talented black dancers that he had ever taught or encountered during his career which goes against preconceptions at the time of black dancers not performing ballet.

²⁰ Shook's dancing career involved performing with Ballet Russes de Monte Carlo, and he also danced in musicals and performed with the New York City Ballet. His teaching experience led him to work at the Katherine Dunham School of Dance, and once it closed in 1955, he opened the Studio of Dance Arts.

²¹ Geoffrey Holder (1930-2014) was a Trinidadian dancer, choreographer, actor, painter and costume designer (Dunning and McDonald, 2014 online). He joined in his brother Boscoe's folk dance company and travelled to England in the mid-1940s to perform on television and stage. When his brother left London, Holder became the director for the company taking the company to "the first Caribbean Arts Festival in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where they represented Trinidad to great acclaim" (Schwartz and Schwartz, 2011:117) in 1951. In 1954 his company was invited to New York by Agnes de Mille. He taught at the Katherine Dunham School and from 1956 to 1958 he performed with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet as was a principal dancer. In 1960 his company dissolved. He married dancer Carmen de Lavallade in 1955 and they had a son Léo. He acted in 1973 James Bond film *Live and Let Die*, amongst other films (Dunning and McDonald, 2014 online).

5.7 New York City Ballet and the Dance Theatre of Harlem

Balanchine supported Mitchell's vision in many ways: not only did he help with funding and serving on the board, but he gave the company free choreographic rights for DTH to perform his ballets, including "classics like *Agon* and *Concerto Barocco*" (Garafola, 2005:329). This meant Mitchell could perform Balanchine's ballets at his own discretion with full consent and authority. Most ballet companies would have to request permission from the NYCB to perform even one of his ballets and then have them overseen for stylistic accuracy, therefore it could be argued that Balanchine respected Mitchell's company enough to allow him free rights to his repertoire. Mitchell was fortunate to have this opportunity, particularly considering the social perceptions of black dancers in ballet. The Balanchine Trust currently protects copyright of his work (NYCB, 2011 online).

In May 1971 Balanchine invited DTH to perform with NYCB at the New York State Theater for a benefit gala. This was a ground-breaking collaboration for Balanchine, bringing together a recently established African American ballet company to perform with a very experienced international company. Banes (1994:62) notes "it was the only time Balanchine's vision of a totally integrated company was realised". This collaboration was occurring at a time when the social climate was slowing adapting to the idea of integration in 'white' America (Gruen, 1976:441). Balanchine and Mitchell choreographed Concerto for Jazz Band and Orchestra, which was a combination of jazz and ballet dance styles (as reflected in the title) composed by Swiss composer Rolf Liebermann. Dance critic Anna Kisselgoff (1971:47) reviewed the ballet in the New York Times:

"Concerto for Jazz Band and Orchestra" whose use of two orchestras could be paralleled by two companies on stage. Mr Balanchine had previously considered staging the ballet, the title of which comes from the score. "But", he said, "I needed people who really knew how to dance jazz. And I needed an experienced jazz orchestra."

Reviews noted that DTH performed most of the jazz sections, whilst NYCB danced the more balletic sections of the music. Kisselgoff observed (1971:47) that "at one level, it will be possible to see the Harlem Dance Theatre's sequences identified with the jazz band and the City Ballet dancers with the ballet orchestra". Kisselgoff's article goes on to mention a

section of the dance where DTH and NYCB dancers partner each other, hence integrating on stage. Gruen interviewed Shook (1976:444) about the gala, who said: “Our dancers were presented as the cliché idea of all-black dancers – all they can do is jazz. However, I thought that our dancers showed up to wonderful advantage. They danced with much more energy, they were better trained”. The racial identity of the dancers and their level of professional experience were also pointed out. However, Gruen (1976:441) himself noted that “the brilliant balletic refinement of the tautly trained white company might, more likely, been seen to advantage over the younger and less experienced black group”. Balanchine racialised DTH by choosing them to perform the jazz sections to create an ‘authentic’ jazz-ballet, as noted in the example above. However, Mitchell said of the experience: “the score used was the kind on which you couldn’t force another style. [...] Also, I felt my kids learned a great deal by working with the New York City Ballet. You can’t buy what one can learn from Mr. B” (Gruen, 1976:443). Balanchine and Mitchell had agreed on the structure of the ballet: “At the start of the project, both directors drew up what Mr. Mitchell called ‘an outline’” (Kisselgoff, 1971:47).

Despite Balanchine’s and Mitchell’s good intentions when staging this event and the integration of both companies on stage, this performance highlighted the fact that Balanchine did not employ enough black ballet dancers in his company. Thus, Barnes (1971:18) reported:

It was nice to see so many black faces with New York City Ballet. I wonder, incidentally, how long it will be before City Ballet gets another black dancer on its regular roster. I cannot see how any company that is, in effect, our national company can adopt a segregated racial policy, nor can I readily see any other explanation of the absence of black dancers from City Ballet.

Balanchine was offended by these remarks and said in an interview with Gruen (1976:444): “He would like to see more black faces in the company [...] You must understand that Negro blood or Japanese blood or Russian blood doesn’t mean a thing to me. I don’t take people because they are black or white. I take exquisite people – people who are made to dance certain types of dancing, which for me is mainly classical dancing”. Balanchine tries hard to give the impression that he is not biased or racist towards employing black dancers, but later in the interview he said: “I don’t want to see two Japanese girls in my Swan Lake. It’s not

right. It's not done for them. It's like making an American blonde into a geisha". Why was Balanchine racist about Japanese ballet dancers when he had employed and worked with many African Americans? It could be argued that Balanchine racially labels people according to his perception of the symbolic cultural order, as mentioned by Hall (1997:236): "Stable cultures require things to stay in their appointed place. [...] What unsettles culture is 'matter out of place' – the breaking of our unwritten rules and codes". When applying Hall's definition of the symbolic cultural order to Balanchine's double standards, it seems that he perceived African Americans as a race that he was familiar with and knew that they could perform ballet, whilst he was unfamiliar with Japanese ballet dancers and ignorant of their capabilities, hence his racist comment.

The collaboration of NYCB and DTH at that time was artistically pioneering, even though each group's place within the ballet was at least partially determined by the music. Nevertheless, issues of race and representation are prevalent in this production, even though Mitchell and Balanchine wanted the event to be a reflective partnership that would motivate integration within the ballet studio and change audience perceptions. Mitchell said: "We wanted a truly integrated feeling [...] Not a black company here and a white company here. They just happen to be black and white. That's the way it should be in the arts. And in life, period" (Kisselgoff, 1971:47). Mitchell's relationship with Balanchine enabled DTH to maintain world-class recognition as a technically skilful ballet company, hence Mitchell's standards reflected those of his mentor. Gottschild (1998:67) notes that "Mitchell's ensemble has earned an international reputation for excellence and is, moreover, one of the American ballet troupes lauded for its execution of the Balanchine repertoire". Mitchell could accomplish a high level of performance dancing Balanchine's repertoire: not only was he a former dancer of the NYCB, but he had contributed to the creation of some of his ballets. Furthermore, his ballet style was a "neo-classic fusion of classical technique and African American dance styles [that] have led to contemporary ballet which is undisputedly bound up with Africanist aesthetic principles" (DeFrantz, 2000:184).

5.8 Dance Theatre of Harlem in London

DTH was not the first African American ballet company to tour Britain. The first was the New York Negro Ballet in 1957, which was founded by African Americans Ward Flaming and Thelma Hill in 1954, as mentioned in Chapter Four. Prior to the New York Negro Ballet's British tour, the first black British ballet company to exist was Les Ballets Nègres, founded by Jamaicans Berto Pasuka and Richard Riley in 1946. Although Pasuka and Riley were trained in ballet, the repertoire of the company was mainly African-Caribbean or modern dance genres. In 1952 the company toured Britain and Europe, but due to lack of funds the company closed in 1953 (Adair, 1992:168-169; Roy, 2013 online).

In 1957 the New York Negro Ballet performed in Britain; however, before they travelled, their London performances were cancelled. Dance historian Dawn Lille Horwitz (2002:334) found mixed reviews for the tour, which travelled to "Glasgow [...] Newcastle, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Liverpool, Leeds and Cardiff". Reviews varied, though some applauded the company's performance. For example, the Edinburgh critic wrote "If the [...] aim is to show that negro dancers can perform in classical ballet then the production [...] last night proved that the experiment has achieved a large degree of success" (unnamed author quoted in Horwitz, 2002:334). Horwitz also cites reviews that criticise the notion of a black ballet company performing ballet: another unnamed critic from Edinburgh commented: "Able as these dancers can comport themselves in traditional classical ballet, it is a pity that they should waste their time on what is not really their element" (Horwitz, 2002:335). Horwitz's research highlights different reviews of the company's tour and how the perception of black dancers performing ballet was inspiring to some audiences whilst strange to others. She writes about performer Bernard Johnson's experience of touring Britain with the company, who "felt that in 1957 laymen were simply not prepared to see a company consisting of black ballet dancers" (Horwitz, 2002:335).

The New York Negro Ballet had set the stage 17 years before DTH's arrival in Britain in 1974. Would British audiences' perceptions of an all-black company change and become more accepting of people from the African diaspora performing classical ballet? DTH was

fortunate to start its company tour in London: this was an opportunity that the New York Negro Ballet was not able to achieve, since their tour of London was cancelled in 1957.²² The African American experience and the black British experience²³ had some similarities: consequently, Mitchell had arrived in Britain at a time when the undercurrents of black political movements were joining forces to fight the system, and these similarities will be discussed further in the following chapters.

Artistically, Mitchell was on his own agenda in London and he was on a quest to prove that people from the African diaspora were also able to dance ballet. Performing at Sadler's Wells in London was important to Mitchell as it was a starting point for DTH to being recognised outside the United States. Mitchell said: "London meant an awful lot to the company because they feel it is a seat of classical dance [...] London has been a proving ground to the company in many, many ways" (Dance & Dancers, 1974:17). Mitchell's performances showed audiences that black dancers could perform classical ballet, as they were still a rarity in British ballet at the time. Dance critic Peter Williams' (1974:22) review in Dance & Dancers observed that "what was shown during the season was quite enough to prove Arthur Mitchell's point which is that black dancers *can* take their rightful place in all areas of dance". Whilst Mitchell is credited for his pioneering ambitions to create a company for black dancers to perform ballet, critics were noted by dance scholar Joselli Audain Deans (2000:125) to have disputed their level of technique. There seems to be a recurring questioning of black dancers' ability to performing classical ballet, which will be further evaluated in Chapters Eight and Nine and in the interviews with British dancers.

²² Mitchell had experienced racism whilst growing up and during his professional career in America, and this would have prepared him for 1970s Britain. In 1974 when Mitchell visited Britain, black people were experiencing similar discrimination to what African Americans had faced earlier, and were fighting for equality in employment, housing and education (Fryer 1984:387–391). In Britain educated black people who found employment were being paid lower wages than their white colleagues. They experienced poor housing and overcrowding in rented accommodation. Black children in schools were bullied by white students and teachers would discriminate by paying less attention to them. Black people were also harassed through the expression of racial hatred from members of the public and police brutality (Fryer 1984:387-391).

²³ Black and Asian people suffered because some elements of mainstream society resisted integration. Many ex-British colonies were made independent during the 1950s to the 1970s and an influx of minorities entered Britain to find a better life, permanently changing the face of the nation. Historian Peter Fryer (1984: 381) wrote: "The problem was not white racism, but the black presence; the fewer black people there were in this country the better it would be for 'race relations' [...] attacks on black people, far from diminishing, mounted from year to year." Despite Britain's initial request for labour from the colonies to help rebuild the economy after the Second World War, new immigrants who requested permanent residency were treated as second-class citizens (Fryer, 1984:372).

Mitchell's dancing experience with the NYCB and his associations with the world-renowned Balanchine may have influenced the company's critical reception. For example, one of the reviews commended Mitchell as one of the stars of NYCB. Journalist Alexander Bland's²⁴ (1974:22) review in the The Observer mentions that "Arthur Mitchell, one of the stars of the New York City Ballet, decided to form a centre where his fellow Afro-Americans could study dancing and its attendant crafts; and here already is a performing group able to undertake an international tour". Reviews for the DTH tour were overall critically balanced: for example, dance critic Mary Clarke's (1974:10) review in The Guardian describes: "The company is irresistible. Young, fresh; still excited about the pleasures of the physical movement, they move with ease from the most demanding choreography of George Balanchine to the classical capers of 'Le Corsaire'". In contrast to this review, Bland (1974:22) comments: "The company already has a strong personality and some fine artists. The fact that they are non-white seems magnificently irrelevant: that they are non-European may prove of greater significance. Exactly where the troupe will fit into the ballet spectrum is an intriguing question". Bland's comments exemplify the questioning of what African American/black dancers could achieve.

Situating the diversity of DTH's dance programme within mainstream ballet may be a problem, but DeFrantz would define DTH's dance style as 'black classicism': a combination of "George Balanchine's neoclassic fusion of classical technique and African American dance styles have led to a contemporary ballet repertory which is undisputedly bound up with Africanist aesthetic principles" (DeFrantz, 2000:184). He comments: "dancing well 'in between' idioms became a hallmark of African American achievement in ballet and a recognizable standard of black classicism" (DeFrantz, 2000:183). Dixon (also known as Gottschild) further notes that the term 'black classicism' has also been used by dance critic Arlene Croce, who defines the concept simply as black dancers performing ballet. "Despite the company's unquestionable mastery of European-based ballet, she would have us believe that it performs in a Black dance style. [...] Black dancers are defined and limited by the White consensus that Black dance and Black dancers are synonymous" (Dixon, 1990:118–

²⁴ Alexander Bland was a joint pseudonym of critic Nigel Gosling and his wife, the dancer Maude Lloyd.

119). Therefore, Dixon's comments on Croce's perceptions evaluated DTH based on the Eurocentric classification of black dancers performing ballet. The issue of black classicism requires further research.

DTH was praised for its performance of Agon, which Clarke (1974:10) acclaimed in The Guardian as better than the NYCB's performance. Dance critic John Percival (1974:8) also commended the technicality of Agon in The Times, which he found outstanding compared to other companies that he had seen. However, other classical repertoire performances of the tour were criticised for their technical proficiency and timing. It can be argued that technicality is an issue that dance critics have reviewed when black dancers perform ballet: this was demonstrated earlier in Chapter Four in John Martin's review of Randolph Sawyer's performance (Martin, 1931b:4).

While Mitchell's programme varied from classical ballet to African American dance styles and included "African ritual, Caribbean voodoo, memories of slavery in the South, Jazz – all contributed to the company's subject matter and therefore to its style" (Harris, 1974:8), the variety of dance styles may have in fact confused the audience at that time, who would have been used to a ballet company only performing ballet repertoire. Percival (1974:8) comments: "Mitchell himself adds confusion by wanting both to prove that Negroes can dance classically, and to show their range in works with African or black American inspiration". Bland (1974:22) offers a concerned review regarding the company's diverse repertoire:

There are no rights and wrongs in art and this style is a sign of a healthy company individuality. But it certainly would not do for the nineteenth-century classics, and the natural development in the other direction, towards ethnic folk movement, seems to lead this particular troupe into an area dangerously near to the revue style from which it is, very rightly trying to escape.

Bland's comments highlight his concerns about the company's programme, which simulates a 'stereotypical' repertoire that early campaigners like 1930s dance pioneer Hemsley Winfield, (as discussed in Chapter Three), worked to move away from and towards African Americans creating new material rather than generic, culturally associated material.

DTH's tour of London was ground-breaking as it hoped to inspire the public's perception of black dancers performing ballet. The company was also commended by some press. Dance critic David Vaughan's (1974:690) review in the Dancing Times noted that Mitchell "understands that at the same time as you entertain a new audience you have to educate them, and the only way to do that is to give them the best you can". It is evident that Mitchell did educate new audiences and as a result in August 1974 the company was invited to perform for the Queen at the Royal Variety Performance at The London Palladium Theatre (Sutcliffe, 1974:10).

5.9 Conclusion

Mitchell was fortunate to gain employment with NYCB at a time when segregation laws in some parts of the USA prevented integration, and Balanchine was courageous in employing Mitchell at this time. Balanchine's exposure to jazz music and dance in the 1920s and 1930s in Paris enabled him to pioneer a new fusion of ballet in his choreographic works, and Mitchell was a part of this experiment.

This chapter has explored Mitchell's experiences through two topical issues of race and representation: first through his social environment, represented by the cultural climate of America, and secondly through the liberal attitude of American dance through the integration of black dancers into mainstream companies. Although Mitchell performed special roles that Balanchine had created for him, did colour casting stop Mitchell from progressing in the ballet profession? Colour casting will be analysed throughout the thesis and summarised in the conclusion. Issues of race and representation at play in Mitchell's creation of DTH have remained central to this chapter. First, Mitchell's motivation to create the company was inspired by his personal experience of working and performing within NYCB, where he encountered colour casting in some of Balanchine's ballets, and where he was also used as a muse to create and assist Balanchine with black dance genres and interpret jazz music arrangements through dance in some of his ballets.

The political climate at the time also inspired Mitchell to form DTH, including the views of African American civil rights activists such as Dr King, who encouraged racial harmony, and Malcolm X, who initially encouraged economic and political separatism for black people. Racial separatism may have inspired Mitchell to create an all-black ballet company; however, this would not have happened without the collaboration of his associates, Balanchine, Kirstein and Shook. The collaborative performance of the NYCB and DTH in 1971 was courageous for these companies at that time, but once again issues of race and representation of the dancers were highlighted by the press with regards to the dancers' performance experience and issues of stereotyping dance genres in accordance with ethnicity, as in the example of black dancer performing jazz sections and white dancers performing the more classical sections.

Mitchell succeeded in achieving his political intention to tour Britain and prove that dancers from the African diaspora could perform ballet, starting with a three-week season at Sadler's Wells in London. However, in each example in this chapter the conflicts of race and representation are always at the forefront of the discussion. Mitchell did prove that African American dancers could perform ballet and he wanted the world to understand this concept. The purpose of the DTH was to encourage and promote more integration within the mainstream ballet companies. However, the perception of whether DTH is still labelled a 'black classical' company or whether mainstream ballet has finally accepted the company as simply a professional American dance company has yet to be explored. Because of Mitchell's pioneering efforts, did DTH make it easier for future generations from the African diaspora to succeed in classical ballet? These questions will be explored in further chapters.

CHAPTER SIX

SOCIO-CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF BALLET

The middle and upper classes arguably have more leisure time and disposable income to enjoy what others might perceive as a luxury. Lower-class blacks (and lower-class whites) may, in fact, be less likely to go to a museum (or ballet, opera, or play, for that matter), but these activities may be more available to middle-class black[s...] who have comparatively more money and time. (Khanna, 2010:62)

6.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore some of the complex socio-cultural values and perceptions of ballet, with reference to its categorisation as a 'high art' form. It will consider how artistic values within ballet affect members of different 'classes' and evaluate their interpretation of this dance genre. Unravelling some of these socio-cultural perceptions may reveal the typical 'class' of people that participates in ballet in contemporary society and whether traditional perceptions of 'high art' are still active. This evaluation will first briefly establish the theoretical relationship between high art and dance through dance scholar Sherril Dodds' research. It will also examine the financial significance of ballet in Britain in relation to its hierarchal establishment in the light of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical structure of 'cultural capital', and evaluate how the working class perceives 'high art', considering whether access to 'high art' is more accessible across classes today. This will be followed by a brief examination of how artists from working-class backgrounds have broken the perceived 'class' barriers to participate in ballet, with particular reference to black British artists. The aim of this chapter is to establish a foundation of socio-cultural perceptions in ballet in order to apply some of the theoretical analyses of values to compare and comprehend how a British sub-culture – in this instance, black British people – may view ballet when considering a career in this profession.

6.1 Socio-cultural values in dance

The European origins of ballet have been documented by numerous scholars (Clarke and Crisp, 1973; Lawson, 1976; Greskovic, 2005; Guest, 1984; Kirstein, 1984; Lee, 2002;

Homans, 2010). Due to its hierarchical European origins and elite training, ballet has been categorised as a 'high art' form. Dance scholar Lesley-Anne Sayers (1997:131) notes that ballet is "celebrated throughout its literature in Britain as at least the Western dance form that carries the highest aesthetic value i.e. its capacity for 'beauty', for formal sublimity, and the grand style. [...] The sense of ballet is a refined, profound and established tradition". Ballet is artistically valued in today's society: for example, it was featured in the 2012 London Olympics closing ceremony, where retired ballerina Darcey Bussell performed a short sequence with 200 dancers from the Royal Ballet and other British dance companies on 12 August 2012, choreographed by Alastair Marriott and Christopher Wheeldon (London 2012 Olympics, 2012). Ballet's presence in the Olympics emphasises its national importance: as cultural theorist Angela McRobbie (1997:208) notes, "ballet is simultaneously a 'low' high art, a spectacle for virtuoso performance, a part of the 'national heritage', a showcase for other national identities and an opportunity for promoting international relations". Its high-art status is highlighted within the significant titles of organisations that receive a Royal Charter from the Queen, like the Royal Ballet Company and the Royal Ballet School, granted this recognition of the highest honour in 1956, whilst the Birmingham Royal Ballet was granted this status in 1990 (Chilvers, [1990] 2009:28).

Though ballet's tradition and national representation is still of significant value within British society, what differentiates this dance form's status from other styles? The concept of social values in dance was explored by Dodds, whose research finds a complex multitude of theories that highlight layers of objective and subjective perspectives in their relation to the arts, including dance. She investigates "why we might privilege one artistic practice over another and how we make judgements of worth through our intellectual pursuits" (2011:11). This concept is very important to this study because socio-cultural perceptions will be considered when analysing whether constructs of 'high art' are still operating in society and whether they have an impact on the individuals who participate in ballet.

Historically, the impact of social values has gradually changed the construct of high art, now considered a matter of individual appreciation. Dodds explores the theoretical concept of the

individual's interpretation of art in the field of arts and humanities, and explains that "in recognition of the humanist conception of the free-thinking individual, there is clearly more scope with this methodological tradition to allow subjectivities, ambiguities and personal values to enter the research field" (Dodds, 2011:12). Dodds suggests that further investigations on individual perceptions of socio-cultural values in high art with reference to a changing society should be carried out. She further explores the concepts of human evaluation and whether social values influence perceptions of 'good' or 'bad' art through the academy and arts practice (Dodds 2011:14-27). To conclude, Dodds discusses how art is judged with regards to a person's status in society are analysed through value systems:

Given that evaluation is a socially situated act, individualised, collective and institutionalized assertions of worth are the means by which value is constructed, negotiated, revisited and modified. I concluded that neither the absolutist notion of inherent worth nor the relativist assertion of cultural equality offers a satisfactory lens to explore how value operates in relation to popular dance. The field of cultural studies potentially offers a useful entry to the question of value with its focus on popular forms of expression. (Dodds, 2011: 27-28)

Dodds explores the complex fields of theoretical analysis on value systems and the effects of art in relation to dance, and highlights areas where further research is required. With reference to Dodds' work, this chapter explores the value of ballet in society through numerous perspectives; however, the next section will first explore its financial status and establish its worth.

6.2 Financial value and high-art status

The value of ballet as a high art form can be determined through the amount of financial aid it receives, for example, from government funding bodies like the Arts Council of England (ACE). It can also be assessed through the amount of cultural tourism generated for Britain's cultural industry. Journalist Georgia Snow reported that ([Snow](#), 2015 online):

Cultural tourism – including theatregoing – contributes £3.2 billion a year to London's economy [...]. The report, called The Value of Culture Tourism to London, was carried out by the Greater London Authority and has been published in conjunction with a new cultural tourism vision from the Mayor of London. [...] Cultural tourism is defined as including areas such as theatre, opera, ballet and music, as well as museums, galleries, heritage sites and shopping. The report found that 24% of international tourists visiting London attended the theatre. Of those visiting other parts of the UK, 18% attended theatre performances.

Whilst cultural tourism encompasses many organisations, Snow's article indicates that 18% (57.6 million) people attend theatre, including ballet, which therefore illustrates ballet's valuable contributions to the creative economy. Cultural theorist Paul Willis (1996:2) notes that "the existence, reproduction and appreciation of the high arts or 'official arts' depends on institutions, from individual art galleries, museums, theatres, ballet companies to the Arts Council itself". Willis also demonstrates that ballet is amongst the most established high art forms within British society, subsidised by 'ACE'. There are many dance companies in Britain and of the different genres represented, ballet has the highest overhead cost. Ballet receives the highest amount of financial aid (Arts Council of England National Portfolio, 2012). 'ACE's Dance Mapping report (2009:79) states that "ballet companies received 55% of total Arts Council England investment and account for 27% of the total public engagement". More recent observations from the 'ACE' reported that:

After the last investment round in 2012, the Arts Council identified the need for an analysis of its funding for large-scale opera and ballet companies. We knew that companies had been under considerable financial stress in recent years, partly because of ever-increasing pressures on public funding and also as a result of their fixed business models. All together seven opera and ballet companies currently receive 22% of National Portfolio funding. ('ACE', 2016:1)

Although there have been government cut-backs, as mentioned in the report, an example of a highly-funded ballet company is the Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB), which was awarded just over £7.5 million (£7,891,000) for the 2015–16, 2016–17 and 2017–18 financial years (Deloitte LLP, 2015:8). In contrast, Ballet Black, the only black and Asian ballet company in Britain, received no funding from 'ACE' since its establishment in 2001 until 2016, when it was awarded £120,000 from the Creative Case for Diversity fund – Elevate²⁵. The amount of funding a ballet company receives from government funding bodies validates their status as an art form, and thus their contribution to the creative industry and to the British economy should also be taken into account. The Royal Ballet Company (RBC) is based at the Royal

²⁵ Some of the aims of the fund were created to:

Strengthen the resilience of organisations which seek to advance equality between those sharing different protected characteristics, in particular, equality for Black and minority ethnic people and disabled people. To advance equality we need to create opportunities for Black and minority ethnic people, disabled people, and people from other groups whose participation in the arts is disproportionately low – further enable contribution to the Creative Case for Diversity, enriching the arts for artists and audiences – support organisations to broker partnerships with National Portfolio Organisations to advance the artistic mission of partners and help them respond to the challenges of diversifying their programme, audiences, leadership and workforce. (Arts Council of England, 2017 online)

It is an incredible achievement that Ballet Black has finally received funding from the 'ACE' and that the 'ACE' have established a fund to reflect the need to support more companies trying to promote diversity in the arts.

Opera House (ROH) and they receive funding from 'ACE' to be distributed to the RBC. The ROH annual review for 2014/2015 notes that "75% of [their] income [is] generated from ticket sales, funding and commercial activity; £3+ [...] for every pound of grant received" (ROH The Annual report 2014/2015, 2017 online). While the breakdown of the Royal Ballet's financial contribution was not stated, no doubt it generated a generous income for the ROH.

Due to its historical origins, ballet as a dance form is fortunate to be able to generate a high income. As dance scholar Marion Kant (2007:13) notes, "dance as an elite activity was strengthened in the Renaissance because it became a form of consumption of both time and money". This historical perception has led to the view that only the elite minority are able to participate in this genre, because only the wealthy members of the royal court during the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries were able to participate in dance classes. King Louis XIV of France could capitalise on this idea when he institutionalised ballet. Lee (2002:66) states that:

Ballet had always been the strongest venue for social interaction among the nobility. Thus, in order to get control over his court, Louis understood he needed to control dance. To accomplish this, he confiscated the ballet for his own use by institutionalizing it and, as a result, all organization and performance of ballet was subject to his authority.

Since the institutionalisation of ballet in the seventeenth century, ballet has not only maintained its traditional hierarchical position as a pursuit of the nobility, but it has sustained a high economic status over the centuries. Ballet's financial success could therefore be categorised into three examples of 'capital', as defined by Bourdieu: economic, social and symbolic. Bourdieu ([1986] 2011:82) elaborates on these distinctions:

Economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights [...] *Cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications; and *social capital*, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility.

It is evident that these divisions have all contributed to ballet's high-profile status. As highlighted above, its economic capital can be seen in the great contributions ballet makes to the British economy through tourism, shown by the numbers of people who attend performances at the theatre. Cultural capital is explored throughout this chapter with

reference to the people of different classes and races that are associated with ballet; and ballet's social capital is investigated throughout this thesis by researching the multiple layers of diverse 'connections' within the ballet 'communities'. Nevertheless, are there other factors that need to be explored in order to comprehend why ballet is considered a 'high art'?

6.3 High art and ballet

If ballet is perceived as a high art form, this reflects the "institutionalized canons which attempt to place the 'works' of art into finite hierarchies differentiating greater and lesser value", as Willis (1996:2) describes. Willis goes on to say that "of course these hierarchies are not fixed" (1996:2), though anthropologist Cynthia J. Novack (1993:39) notes that "ballet holds a position of cultural and institutional dominance". Novack points to the perception of ballet's origins, referring to its hierarchical status that remains 'fixed' and that has not changed since it was institutionalised in 1671 by King Louis XIV. The social construction of high art and ballet is associated with power, status and wealth: as illustrated above by Novack (1993), Willis (1996) and Sayers (1997), these beliefs were upheld by social value systems. High art is often associated with its hierarchical origins and influenced by society's higher and middle classes (Bennett, Savage, Bortolaia *et al.*, 2009:11). Socio-cultural values in relation to the appreciation of high art can be evaluated through Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, as mentioned above, which is learnt through upbringing and education. His theory is further explained by cultural and social theorist Tony Bennett, who notes that "cultural capital is embodied, and the educated middle classes are physically as well as intellectually socialised into appreciating 'legitimate' culture, that which is institutionalised through being venerated in the educational system and the cultural apparatuses associated with museums and art galleries" (Bennett *et al.*, 2009:11).

If cultural capital enables the middle classes to understand high art through inherited knowledge (for example, learnt in childhood or through education), and if the upper classes inherit the socio-cultural values of high art, this would therefore lead to the assumption that low, middle or working-class groups may not have an understanding of high art because of

their socio-cultural dissociation or non-education in this field. Ballet is therefore an institutional practice that embodies both 'cultural capital' and 'high art'. French sociologist Jeremy Lane (2000:52) notes that as "Bourdieu argued, the aesthetic disposition, measured by the propensity to visit art galleries and hence appreciate fine art, formed part of the bourgeois habitus, constituting a stock of 'cultural capital' which the dominant status could exploit to naturalise and reproduce their dominant status". Willis (1996:2) considers the varying values of hierarchical art forms and how they are perceived by society, and states that "institutions include not only buildings and organisations, but also systematic and specific social values and practices". His research found that the appreciation for high-art forms is culturally learnt amongst the upper and middle classes, and therefore these forms are considered 'good culture' (1996:4). Willis's work also refers to the "hyperinstitutionalization/dissociation of art" amongst members of society who do not appreciate or understand art, and describes this group as not "uncultured", merely lack[ing] the code, but they're seen and may see themselves as ignorant, insensitive and without the finer sensibilities of those who really 'appreciate'" (Willis, 1996:3). Willis's research demonstrates how an appreciation for 'high art' is culturally learnt by members of the middle or upper classes, who are mainly a minority within society, whilst working-class members of society are seen to be ignorant of these art forms because of their cultural disassociation, hence their lack of appreciation for high art. Bourdieu (1987:41) refers to the dominance of high art standards and how this affects the working class: he notes that "it must never be forgotten that the working-class 'aesthetic' is a dominated 'aesthetic' which is constantly obliged to define itself in terms of the dominant aesthetics".

6.4 Breaking through high art and socio-cultural barriers

If, according to Bourdieu (1987:41), the 'working class aesthetic' must be defined by high art standards in order to acquire social recognition, this is one way for the working class to break through class barriers and to be accepted as equals within this genre, thus encouraging the participation and integration of the lower and middle classes in high-art forms. The socio-cultural barriers of high art have been broken by many working-class artists over the years: for example, in the genre of British ballet, the screenplay by Lee Hall (2000)

tells the fictional story of Billy Elliot, about a boy who was brought up by his widowed father who works as a coal miner in northern England. Elliot is passionate about dance and takes ballet classes at the local dance school, which leads him to audition and gain a scholarship to train at the Royal Ballet School. Hall described his experiences as a screenwriter before he wrote Billy Elliot, and describes the social barriers of the film industry and its associations with the concept of high art:

Here was the class divide – in film. It may as well have been called High Art House. Strangely, the best of the British work in this vein, venerated by critics and institutions such as the BFI [British Film Institute], was firmly about class and aspiration yet it was marginalised as inaccessible (primarily, one assumed, by the audiences it represented). [...] There seemed to be an acceptance that film-making was just film-making, and it was economics that defined form rather than something inherently 'High' or 'Low' about the art itself. (Hall, 2001: VIII)

Hall's (2001: IX) experience within the film industry reveals that the gatekeepers of high art inspired him to write the screenplay for Billy Elliot:

It became obvious to me there was no real reason that I should have to emulate the aesthetic forms of my heroes in order to address the subject matter that inspired me. I was working on an idea about a ballet dancer in a pit village, which seemed to allow for all kinds of artiness, but if it was about the kid reaching for High Art, why couldn't I strive to find a popular (read 'Low') form for the story?

Historian Luke Purshouse (2010:313) comments on Hall's theme of high art and ballet for the Billy Elliot story and states that what "undermines the stereotypical picture of ballet as elitist is the blending of the depiction of this so-called 'high' art form with frequent references to 'popular' culture". Hall's screenplay of the Billy Elliot story is very similar to Shevelle Dynott's experience, a black British ballet dancer who currently performs with the English National Ballet as an artist of the company (ENB, 2012). Dynott grew up on a deprived estate in Brixton, South London. He took movement classes at his local school and was chosen to audition for the Royal Ballet's Chance to Dance programme, which provides free training for talented young dancers from the local communities of three London boroughs, Lambeth, Southwark, and Hammersmith and Fulham. The Chance to Dance programme will be discussed further in Chapter Seven, whilst Dynott's training and experience is considered in Chapter Eight. Dynott auditioned for a scholarship and continued his training in ballet at the Royal Ballet School, and he is now employed by the English National Ballet (Dynott, 2012).

Dynott is only one example of many that have broken the barriers of socio-cultural high art perceptions, although as mentioned in Chapter Five, Katherine Dunham is documented as having taught ballet to black middle-class students as early as in the 1930s (Aschenbrenner, 2002:26-27). In this context, Dynott is perceived as an artist whose class and racial background is not common in this art form. Nevertheless, there are similarities between Billy Elliot and Dynott: both are male youths from socially deprived areas of England whose parents are working-class citizens, and they both pursued careers in ballet – a high art form. The only difference between these boys is the colour of their skin. Since the production of the Billy Elliot story as a film (2000) and a musical (2005), the media has reported not only real-life stories of ‘white’ Billy Elliots, but they have also selected Dynott’s story as an example of a black ‘Billy Elliot’. For example, The Evening Standard (2005) published his story, headlined ‘Brixton’s Billy Elliot: As the Stage Version of the Hit Film Opens, a Rising Star Tells of His Difficult Journey from a Council Estate to the Royal Ballet’ (Devine, 2005). There have been many other examples of working-class white and black British dancers who were inspired by the production to participate in ballet, especially Solomon Golding, the first black British dancer to be employed with the Royal Ballet in 2013. He said in an interview: “My grandmother sent Billy Elliot, it just resonated” (Thornhill, 2015). It could be argued that the concept of the Billy Elliot story resonates with many children from working-class or socially deprived backgrounds that have risen from these environments to become successful in their chosen genre.

Since Bourdieu’s (1987) and Willis’ (1996) research, arts organisations have been increasingly working towards integrating high-art forms with artists from diverse backgrounds to capture new and varied audiences from different classes and communities. In contrast to Dynott’s story, an example of a black artist working in collaboration with a ballet institution was in 2010, when black British artist Chris Ofili²⁶ was invited by Minna Moore Ede, curator

²⁶ Ofili was born in Manchester to working-class Nigerian parents who worked for the McVities biscuit factory. He became the first black painter to win the Turner Prize in 1998 with a work of art made of elephant dung (Hudson, 2010). According to Ofili’s Tate profile (2001), “his paintings are concerned with issues of black identity and experience and frequently employ racial stereotypes in order to challenge them. [...] Ofili draws on a wide range of cultural references, from the Bible to jazz and hip hop music, from Blake and Robin to pornographic magazines”. One of Ofili’s most powerful paintings acknowledges the racial attack and murder of Steven Lawrence in Eltham, South London in 1993. The painting No Woman, No Cry (1998) portrays the image of a black woman crying heavy tears and mourning. This painting was dedicated to Steven Lawrence’s mother, Doreen Lawrence (Glaister, 1998).

at the National Gallery, to take part in a project to create set designs, costumes and works of art for the Royal Ballet's performance of Metamorphosis: Titian 2012 at the Royal Opera House, 14–20 July 2012. Ofili also worked in collaboration with sculptor Conrad Shawcross and conceptual artist Mark Wallinger on this project. Ofili was among the first contemporary black artists to be invited to work in collaboration with artists from high-art establishments. He received international recognition by winning the Turner Prize, which gave him 'high art' status in this genre, and he was the first painter to win the prize since "Howard Hogkin in 1985" (Glaister, 1998).

The 'Metamorphosis' project took two years to complete and it was exhibited at London's National Gallery from 11 July to 23 September 2012 (Mackrell, 2012:16). Judith Mackrell, dance critic for The Guardian, documents Ofili's experience of participating in the project. At the beginning of the article she reports on his emotional apprehensions before starting the project. She wrote:

Two years ago, when he agreed to design a new production for the Royal Ballet, he suffered a flash of paranoia. "I was genuinely scared," he says. "If you fall flat on your face there, you break every bone in your body. You're not going to walk away." And Ofili could think of a dozen reasons why he might fail. During most of his career, he had worked as a solitary and self-contained artist. He had never created designs for the stage before, let alone for ballet; and he'd certainly never been involved in an enterprise that promised – or threatened – to be as vast, crowded and competitive as Metamorphosis: Titan 2012. (Mackrell, 2012:16)

It is interesting to note how at the beginning of the article Mackrell reports on Ofili's insecurities or moments of 'paranoia' with regards to his emotional status when commencing this project. She also highlights that the reasons for his doubts and fears of 'failure' were due to his unfamiliarity with the theatre genre and the psychological pressures of delivering creative art for this 'high art' form. Research has found that the word 'failure' or 'fail' is often associated with negative media representations of black people not being able to progress to the top of their chosen field – for example, the headline to dance critic David Dougill's article in The Sunday Times, (1986: 44) 'Why black dancers fail at the *barre* – David Dougill investigates ballet's colour Problems'. Dougill examines the underrepresentation of black dancers in mainstream ballet companies and investigates why they are 'failing' in the profession, with a particular focus on mainstream companies' perceptions of race and representation on the stage. Another example relates to why black students often fail in the

British education system, headlined in The Guardian: “Education expert attacks schools for failing black students” (Lipsett, 2008). Again, in a representation of black citizens – in this case, black children – ‘failing’ is highlighted in the Black Children’s’ Achievement Programme Evaluation government report (Maylor, 2009). Is it a coincidence that Mackrell used the word ‘fail’ when referring to Ofili’s insecurities, or is there a commonality with regards to the media’s representation of black people and their association with the context of failure? These questions will be explored in the final conclusion to this thesis.

In a positive ending to Mackrell’s article, reports on Ofili’s inspired experience whilst working with other artists and the Royal Ballet refer to

the intimacy and the fun of collaboration have been a revelation; he hadn’t realised how much he would learn, nor how natural the transition from studio to theatre would eventually feel. “Working for the stage”, he says, “you’re playing a game of pretend the curtain opens, the audience is absorbed for a period of time. That’s very close to what I do as a painter”
(Mackrell, 2012:16)

Ofili has worked with and collaborated with many artists across genres within the establishment of high art institutions. Despite his race and working-class origins, he is a black contemporary artist associated with high-art status. Therefore, according to Bourdieu’s (1987:41) theory, Ofili has moved from a ‘working-class aesthetic’ to a ‘dominant aesthetic’ as an artist with high-art status.

Dynott and Ofili are both black artists that can be situated within Bourdieu’s (1987:41) aesthetic theory, as explained above: both come from working-class backgrounds and have succeeded in gaining employment and recognition within high-art establishments. These artists demonstrate the opposite of Willis’s perceptions of people who are unfamiliar with high art, who are “absolutely certain they’re not the ‘talented’ or ‘gifted’, the élite minority held to be capable of performing or creating ‘art’” (1996:3). Willis’s reference to the ‘élite minority’ once again highlights dominant classes within society (the upper and middle classes) who are seen as the only ones able to create or perform (or even appreciate) high art. Contrary to Willis’s historical evaluation, given the right training, a talented student from any class or race is quite ‘capable of performing or creating art’ – as illustrated by Dynott and Ofili’s careers.

6.5.1 Black British parents' perceptions of ballet

The perceptions of black British dancers' parents will be examined here to evaluate their opinions on ballet, taking into consideration the fact that their children would be entering a dance genre mainly comprised of white dancers. This is a high-art profession that was culturally unrelated to dancers from the African diaspora, as was mentioned in Chapter Five by dance writers Arnold Haskell (1930:455), John Martin ([1963] 1970:178–179) and Ernestine Stodelle ([1968] 1988:319). Interviews conducted for this research between 2008 and 2015 will be used as evidence to support topical issues. For instance, whilst interviewing former black British ballet dancers of African Caribbean descent who trained at various London ballet institutions during the 1980s, secondary information was collected with regards to their parents' opinions on their entering the ballet profession. For example, one of the interview questions asked, "Were your friends and family supportive of your becoming a dancer?" The analysis revealed differences in perceptions of ballet between mothers and fathers, and revealed parents' concerns with ballet's perceived associations with homosexuality.

Many black British ballet dancers interviewed had parents who were of Caribbean descent, especially Jamaican, and this included many of the dance practitioners who contributed to this thesis. From the interviews in Chapter Eight and Nine, it seems that these dancers' parents mainly arrived from the Caribbean from the end of 1940s to the 1960s to help Britain increase their work force after the Second World War (Chamberlain, 1998:52). Examples of the dancers mentioned in this thesis whose parent or parents are of Jamaican decent include Denzil Bailey, Darren Panton, Evan Williams, Shevelle Dynott and Chantelle Gotobed. Why is it that the majority of black British dancers who pursued a career in ballet have parents from this island? Is there a more culturally ingrained interest in encouraging their children to participate in the arts? As mentioned in Chapter Six, Europe and Britain's first black company Les Ballet Nègres was established by Jamaicans Berto Pasuka and Richard Riley in 1946 (Thorpe, 1989:172; Watson, 1999). One of the dance companies with which parents may be familiar is the National Jamaican Dance Theatre, founded by Rex Nettleford and Eddy Thomas in 1962, the same year that the country gained independence

from British rule (Sorquel, 2007:86). Although Jamaica has a known history of dance, further research on this subject is required. The information collated will be further examined to determine why some black parents exhibit 'cultural antipathy' (Cottle and Saha, 2002) towards ballet and whether this may deter black children from entering this dance genre.

6.5.2 Black parents and cultural antipathy

Ballet was not historically performed by people from the African diaspora, who are mainly associated with social, religious or traditional dance genres (Emery, 1988: 241-242).

Because ballet has been culturally unfamiliar to black people, parents tend to have had reservations about their children entering a career in that field. Simon Cottle and Anjan Saha's (2002) report The Glass Ceiling explored the work experience of black and Asian staff in arts organisations, and they reference cultural antipathy as a reason that people from diverse backgrounds, especially black and Asian cultures in Britain, did not 'understand' the arts. Their report found:

A view of certain minority cultures and communities as having as cultural antipathy towards the arts as potential careers for their youngsters. The following are representative of this cluster of views. Lack of awareness of programmes [...] Arts industry not seen as an option to school leavers. Possibly within Asian culture arts is not seen as a high status profession. [...] It is fundamentally peer pressure, family ambition and support and education that have to be addressed.

(Cottle and Saha, 2002:41)

An example of cultural antipathy towards ballet from these communities was established when Lisa Thomas (2011), a former administrator for the Birmingham Royal Ballet's outreach programme Fast Track, stated that during her work experience, she found that the reasons for the low attendance on the scheme were cultural. She explained: "I think part of it is a cultural thing as not having an understanding of what ballet is. [...] I think there is an element of them thinking that [this] isn't for us, still. [Mainly from the parents]" (Thomas, 2011). More information on the Fast Track programme will be explored in Chapter Seven. In an interview with former black British Birmingham Royal Ballet dancer Evan Williams, explaining that his parents were supportive but that they did not understand his decision to make a career in the profession, he states: "To them, my parents didn't know anything about concert dance, so for them it was about the idea of being able to make a living. Dance and making a living from dancing was, what?" (Williams, 2010). Whilst cultural antipathy as

defined by Cottle and Saha refers to an incomprehension of the arts, Bourdieu's theory of capital culture and Willis's theory on the lack of knowledge of ballet go a long way to explaining this scenario (Lane, 2000:52; Willis, 1996:3).

Many of the dancers interviewed had trained in British dance institutions in London from the late 1970s²⁷ onwards. Research from my interviews reveals that some black parents' perceptions and opinions about their children pursuing a career in ballet were typical of this era, especially in the case of fathers who frequently suggested that their sons consider an alternative job (Williams, 2010; Spaulding, 2011). For example, former English National Ballet dancer Denzil Bailey (2010) explains his father's views on his career choice:

My dad wasn't having it at all. He said, "This foolishness, this! All this nonsense jumping around. Boy, go and learn a trade". And it's quite true. If you learn a trade you can work any country in the world. Daddy wasn't happy until he came to my first-year show and said, "Boy, you're quite good, you know!" My mum and dad came, my little niece and nephew came, the whole family came to see my first show in a little tiny theatre school in Golders Green. They loved it. It was a really good show and I was in 3 or 4 pieces so they could see me dance quite a lot.

This perception of ballet or the arts as not a 'real profession' for black or Asian people, as mentioned above by Cottle and Saha, is not only related to this community, but can also be seen as a general opinion in society. For example, this has been discussed by British dance anthropologist Drid Williams ([1991] 2004), who describes her experience when her family voiced their opinions on her choice to enter the dance profession:

Years ago I became aware that theories of theatre and the dance viewed both as "illusion." I remember being deeply shocked and often hurt by the opinions of others, including several family members, who considered the life of a dancer an elaborate deception of some kind. "When are you going to get a *real* job?" they would ask. "When are you going to face up to the realities of life?" It was as if my real life as an artist and dancer was less real than the lives of lumberjacks, secretaries, college professors or waitresses, lawyers or truck drivers, insurance salesmen, priests, nurses – any vocation or profession except those connected with theatre.

²⁷ During this period, Britain was governed by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who had a major impact on the social and economic climate. Black and Asian people in Britain experienced unemployment, discrimination in employment, low pay, police harassment and poor housing and education, and these factors sparked the 1981 riots in major cities across the country (Tomlinson, 2008:77). Education scholar Sally Tomlinson notes that a public inquiry by Lord Scarman was arranged to investigate why the riots occurred. Scarman recommended "more focus on the special problems and needs of the ethnic minorities and included training teachers to understand minority cultures, more involvement in schools by parents, and more police liaison with schools" (2008:77). These recommendations would have taken time to implement, and whilst black parents were still striving to live within a prejudiced society, they were very concerned about their economic situation. Even though parents of the interviewees allowed their children to participate in ballet lessons at that time, they may have perceived it as just a pastime or hobby.

These two examples demonstrate that regardless of race or gender, people who venture into a career in dance sometimes face opposition from their family members.

6.5.3 Black parents and ballet

While cultural antipathy towards ballet is prevalent, the general consensus from the interviews revealed that black children entering the ballet profession were largely accepted and supported by their parents. Mothers were often the ones most available to chaperone their children to dance classes. Former London City Ballet dancer Darren Panton (2002) mentioned how his mother took him to classes at Junior Associates (JA) at the Royal Ballet School during the 1980s. More about Panton's training will be covered in Chapter Eight. Support from mothers and their interest in their children's leisure activities is, however, a general characteristic for mothers of any cultural background. For example, dance scholar Helena Wulff (1998:62) highlights:

Dancers often told me that they had been put in a local ballet school as young children "because I was such a lively kid, moving around all the time". It was usually their mothers who saw this [...] mothers, who drove them long distances to ballet schools, supported them emotionally and financially.

Whilst Wulff provides an example of mothers supporting their children's ballet class activities, fathers also often express interest. For example, black British ballet dancer Shevelle Dynott's recollects his father's encouragement: "My dad took me everywhere [...] and drove me. For a father to do that, the support was always there" (Dynott, 2010). More on Dynott's career will be discussed in Chapters Eight and Nine. Carol Straker, whose parents were from Barbados, is another example of having a father who supported her desire to become a ballet dancer in the 1970s and recalls: "My teacher and my father thought I was quite good at dancing. I thought dancing was all right" (Straker, 2002). Alternatively, some parents recognised that studying ballet provides a disciplined support structure for children. For example, Dynott (2010) describes how his mother always "wanted me to go to a military school just because of the area I was in, she wanted me to have discipline". Dynott grew up in Brixton, South London and his mother believed that by attending ballet classes, his attention would be diverted from becoming involved in street gang activities. Scholar Ian Marsh (2006) notes that "in the early 1980s the inner-city disorders in many parts of Britain,

notably Brixton, Bristol, Liverpool and Manchester, lent support to the stereotype of black youths as disorderly and criminal” (2006:163). The impact of these historical events stigmatised the area where Dynott lived. Dynott’s experience is similar to that of former Cuban principal ballet dancer of the Royal Ballet Company, Carlos Acosta. Acosta’s father diverted him away from street gangs during the 1980s, and he enrolled him into ballet classes to learn a structured discipline (Acosta, 2007).

6.6 ‘Gay’ ballet

The interviews revealed concerns held by fathers about their sons entering the profession because of the perception of ballet being associated with homosexuality. Panton describes his experience working on the Royal Ballet’s outreach Chance to Dance programme, and states that when he was participating in workshops in south London he found that many parents were very sceptical about allowing their children to participate in ballet because there were many homosexuals in the field. He also observed their dislike of black homosexual teachers (Panton, 2008). It could be considered that these parents were not only homophobic, but that black male dancers are not generally considered an appropriate masculine role model in the eyes of parents from these communities. Literature and cultural scholar Peter Stoneley (2006:15) researched this perception of the black male dancer:

There have been moments in African-American culture when homosexuality has been declared a ‘white disease’. At times the Black male classical dancer may have appeared to have turned aside from his more immediate cultural inheritance, while also confounding his culture’s idea of masculinity. This awkward intersection of racial and sexual values extends to the dancer’s relationship with a predominantly white audience. To what extent is that audience’s response determined by the racial preconceptions that it brings to the theatre?

In this instance the ‘audience’ are black parents, whose preconceptions about ballet hinders the child’s artistic progress, and therefore results in a lost opportunity for them to thrive creatively. Dance scholar Ramsay Burt (2001:214) highlights some of the common preconceptions about homosexuality in ballet:

Ballet has attracted a large metropolitan gay audience, and many gay men have sought careers in the dance world. [...] For most of the twentieth century, particularly in countries where homosexuality was a prosecutable offence, ballet’s escapism was the principal means for the expression of gay identities through camp spectacle.

Burt (2001:53) also highlights that:

All male dancers are placed under suspicion with the result that, as is widely recognized, far fewer boys and men are involved in the dance world than girls and women. [...] Homophobic mechanisms channel and block our understanding and appreciation of representations of masculinity that are made by both gay and straight dance artists.

Although the male dancer in ballet may sometimes be perceived as homosexual, artistic integrity of their talent needs to be taken into consideration, not only as a credible performer but as a supportive partner to a ballerina. Male ballet dancers were once representations of the “power and status of men in bourgeois society” (Ramsay, 2001:49), and men continue to dominate the stage, leaving legacies like that of Russian ballet dancer, choreographer and ballet director Rudolf Nureyev (1938–1993).

To summarise, this section provided a brief overview of black parents’ perceptions of ballet. Though many views could be considered here, this chapter focused on key issues that arose from the interviews with the dancers; it evaluated black parents and their cultural antipathy towards ballet, and found that their lack of knowledge of the dance form confirmed a cultural unfamiliarity. The idea of their children creating a career from performing ballet was also unusual to them. However, the dancers who were interviewed had very supportive parents who found that ballet provided a good method of discipline for their children during training. Some black parents were concerned with the image of homosexuality in ballet and the effects of its exposure on their children, although this can be considered to be part of their prejudice and cultural antipathy, which only hindered their children’s creativity. Consequently, if these parents are not educated about ballet as an art form, the next generation may also inherit these perceptions. In this way the circle continues and fewer children are led to participate in ballet, thus creating a cultural divide where ballet is perceived as a high-art form that only white people can perform, and the underrepresentation of black dancers will remain an issue.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of key socio-cultural perceptions of ballet in relation to this thesis. It has examined ballet’s value status in British culture as a high-art form that not only receives the most financial aid through governing bodies compared to other dance

forms, but also contributes to the economy through revenue from ticket sales. Sherril Dodds' research explains how to evaluate values in dance, which was used to explore why ballet is a high-art form. This was interpreted through the works of theorists Paul Willis and Pierre Bourdieu, showing that this divide is not only a matter of taste, but related to education about the art form, which is generally associated with upper and middle classes. Willis and Bourdieu's work also demonstrated how class distinctions expose areas of discrimination in the arts. The example of the Billy Elliot screenplay and film provided insight on how the lower/working classes have become more integrated into the high-art form of ballet, and how the education of an individual dancer can cause a shift from one class structure to another, as a form of transition that Bourdieu's theories mentioned earlier. Dancer Shevelle Dynott is only one class-shifting success story, although there are others, and artist Chris Ofili offers a similar experience to that of black British artists working in ballet. In contrast, interviews with dancers explored the perceptions and values of black parents on ballet to evaluate their opinions on their children entering the field. To conclude, although ballet is considered a high-art form, class barriers can be broken and talented potential black British dancers can have a career in ballet, and with parental support they are given more opportunities to progress in this industry.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BRITISH BALLETS COMPANIES' COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMMES

I became aware that there were many children in our society who had real talent and potential for dance, but who had never had a ballet class or seen a performance. Such potential talent was lost and I felt that ballet companies did not represent the rich ethnic diversity of our society. That was the germ of Chance To Dance.

(Jaffray, BBC World Service, 2001 online)

7.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of two outreach dance programmes, the Royal Ballet's Chance to Dance in London and the Birmingham Royal Ballet's 'Fast Track' scheme. The programmes are designed to deliver free professional ballet classes to children from diverse backgrounds living in deprived areas of London and Birmingham. I will discuss the Chance to Dance project through interviews with dance practitioners Darryl Jaffray, former Director of Education and Access at the Royal Opera House (ROH), and former staff members Darren Panton, Malachi Spaulding and Matthew Paluch. This chapter also includes information from Lisa Thomas, a former administrator for the Birmingham Royal Ballet's Fast Track programme, who shares details of her involvement working on the scheme. A multitude of issues regarding cultural capital will be unpacked within this chapter to explore whether or not these projects present potential hope for more black ballet dancers to represent a multicultural Britain.

7.1 The founding of Chance to Dance

The Chance to Dance programme was founded in 1991 by Darryl Jaffray, who was at that time the Education Officer of the Royal Ballet, and Jane Hackett, the former Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet Education Officer. Jaffray (1992:748) describes how the project came into being: "During a meeting of the Royal Ballet Education Committee, I was asked if I had any ideas about "Equal Opportunities". Ideas! Before I had finished speaking the "Chance to Dance" Project was conceived and accompanied by Jane Hackett, [...] I had embarked on a fact-finding mission". Before continuing to describe the establishment of the project, a brief

overview of Jaffray and Hackett will describe their background and how it contributed to their interest in being involved in this venture.

7.1.1 Darryl Jaffray (1944–): Dance and employment experience

Australian-born Darryl Jaffray started dancing at the age of five and attended the Scully Borovansky Dance School in Sydney (Francis, 2016). At the age of sixteen she auditioned for a scholarship to attend the Royal Ballet School in England. She briefly describes her early years of training and performing with the Royal Ballet Company from 1964 to 1972:

They gave one scholarship every two years for a child from Australia and New Zealand to come to the Royal Ballet. I was that lucky person at age 16 with my little bag. Then I was in the Royal Ballet School for two years and then taken into the Royal after I graduated. It sounds straightforward, but it was hard work. I wasn't the greatest ballerina, but [performed] dramatic roles early on. (Jaffray, 2010)

After eight years of performing with the Royal Ballet Company, Jaffray stopped dancing in 1972 to pursue a psychology degree and a postgraduate certificate in education. Drawing on her experience as a dancer, she reflects on some aspects of the ballet institution:

When I stopped dancing, I had been very disenchanted with the way ballet had been, [it] must have changed. I do believe the arts have such a lot to give for young people for everybody. So why is it [...] considered elitist? [...] I believe there's nothing intrinsic in the art form that says "It's only for middle-class white girls". Why is that? No! Yes, there's the background. But the background of Jazz and whatever is different, doesn't mean a white person can't go on the stage and dance, so why can't a black person perform ballet? (Jaffray, 2010)

Jaffray also worked with the Family Service Unit, Community Relations Council as a primary school teacher in London. Some of her experiences in this job during the 1980s²⁸ enraged her and motivated her to strive to make a change in the ballet industry, as she explains:

I was part of the community relations work, I was asked to witness at the race riots (at their hearings [...]) A lot of things angered me and saddened me, so a lot of my life was spent thinking, "How do you put things right?" If you're somebody that's been illegally arrested or get your head bashed in because you're walking down the street in Southall, you can't do anything. But if you're in a position of power, partially, in an elite organisation, you have some chance of doing things and that's why I went that route, really. Also doing a lot, a lot of community [work], I thought this is ridiculous, my whole life's been in ballet and yet I'm not really using it, I'm using music and things, but I'm turning my back, that has been an important part of my life. So I thought that I had to get back into that somehow to see if things had changed. (Jaffray, 2010)

²⁸ In 1981 race riots took place from April to June across London and in major cities like Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds and Liverpool amongst mainly African, Caribbean and Asian populations who experienced racial discrimination in employment, education and housing (Fryer, 1984:395).

The experience of her community relations work led Jaffray to revisit the arts, and in 1987 she found employment with the ROH, where she worked as the ballet's Education Officer and later as the Director of Education and Access from 1997 until 2006, when she retired (Lebrecht, 455:2001). Jaffray (2010) describes her role and some of the responsibilities bestowed upon her:

I was employed by the Royal Opera House, so there were things you can say as a person, that you can't say as an employee of an organisation. I was offered a job [with] Ballet Rambert [...]. But going back to work at the Royal Opera House to work in education, [it] was actually somebody that I met and [who] said, "Oh, you'd be perfect for that job". Then actually thinking, you have a far better chance of changing things from the inside than from the outside. I was there twenty years! Because I truly believed, that a huge organisation like that takes a lot of the taxpayers' money. [There were] things it should do, but it wasn't necessarily going to do these things unless somebody's [in power].

Jaffray suggests that in order to make changes within an institution like ballet, she had to be employed in a high position so that she could have an impact and make a difference. She describes her initial role at the ROH:

My job as ballet education officer [...] was about making the resources of the Opera House available to people. Activities with teachers all over the world, you know, loads of things. So most of it was about [...] the Opera House helping you as a person enrich your life by using it. And most of it targeted people that wouldn't normally come across it [the organisation], [for example, introducing them to the] wardrobe department and maybe [help them] get a job in design. [The Royal Opera House has] lots of resources – I could set up a project that could employ six or seven teachers that reaches thousands of children, I could never do that working for a small community dance programme. (Jaffray, 2010)

She had the opportunity in her job to offer many workshops that could reach and affect many people's lives; however, Jaffray encountered obstacles in:

Bureaucracy, people's perceptions. So I was fighting within my organisation to change things and I was fighting outside my organisation, because all the people that I wanted to most meet and talk to and share ideas, [heard] "She works at the Royal Opera House and she does ballet". They thought I was all sorts of stuff that I wasn't. It was a double burden. I was an outsider on the inside and I was an outsider on the outside. Tricky. (Jaffray, 2010)

Jaffray's work consistently pulled her in many directions. First of all, she had to represent and programme events for the ROH, and one of her main interests was sustaining the Chance to Dance (CTD) scheme.

It caused problems in my team in a way. It wasn't my largest project because I had other big, big projects. I got criticism within my team particularly from the people from the opera side or the orchestra side [...] because I was trying to do more with the Chance to Dance, more challenging things, than set up a major project for teachers in South Africa or any of the other things I did. There were big projects, the team saw those as equally big and equally important. Well, with Chance to Dance, I wanted to change ballet, really. I can't say I did. (Jaffray, 2010)

It could be argued that due to the scale of Jaffray's work, she was criticised by her team for the amount of time she devoted to the CTD programme. Nevertheless, she casts doubt on her achievements as to whether or not she made an impact on ballet in terms of changing perceptions of dancers from black and ethnic minority groups, or increasing their participation in and performance of ballet. This comment will be taken into consideration again at the end of this chapter.

7.1.2 Jane Hackett (1953–)

Hackett is a dance consultant and writer who trained at the Royal Ballet School and worked as a dancer and choreographer "with companies in England, Germany, Austria, Italy and Mexico (under the auspices of the National Ballet of Cuba)" (Studylib, 2016). She was employed with the education departments at Sadler's Wells, Royal Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet, "promoting collaborative cross-arts projects, initiating the Dancers Degree Course for BRB and 'Chance To Dance' for the Royal Opera House to provide wider access to ballet training and performance" (Studylib, 2016). She was the Director of Education at the Royal Ballet when she developed the Chance to Dance scheme with Jaffray in 1991. Hackett was also the Director of Central School of Ballet (1999–2006) and the Director of the English National Ballet School (2006–2009). She has an MA in Dance Studies from Roehampton University and has held positions including the Co-Director of Creative Learning at Sadler's Wells since 2009, and the Director of National Youth Dance. She is also an "artistic assessor for the Arts Council of England, a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and Vice Chair of Dance UK" (Arts4dementia, online 2016). Hackett's wealth and breadth of experience comes from working in ballet in various roles from dancer to director. She has also encountered diversity at many levels, and so was able to bring her expertise of working with the CTD programme to later develop the Birmingham Royal Ballet's Fast Track initiative. This will be discussed again later in this chapter.

Jaffray and Hackett had many discussions together, as well as with the education committee, to determine how to structure the CTD programme. Jaffray (2010) recollects the early debates they had when developing CTD:

Chance to Dance was different, quite quickly after I arrived because really, it specifically wasn't trying to say, "Let's get people who wouldn't normally have anything to do with it and try and get them to use the resources and use it for themselves". Chance to Dance was different because it was aiming to change the world of ballet and aiming to give access to children. It made ballet different.

There had been some discussion, we had an education committee. Some good people on the education committee. Also Tessa Blackstone,²⁹ very much saying "Do something". The kind of thinking of the time, if there were problems, a lot of people didn't think there were. But people that do think there were problems, kind of thought the obvious place was education. So, they were saying, "Can't we do something through education?" There was a lot of discussion of this. And there were huge problems for a start, the sort of project that I was talking about needed a lot of money. [...] Because I thought it wasn't going to be small, it needed to have a lot of things. It needed to have role models, it really needed to be built into the Royal Ballet. It needed links into the community, into the education sector you know, loads of stuff. It took a long, long time to set up.

In order for a project like CTD to be established with a major British ballet organisation, a fair amount of research visiting projects that had similar aims to involve the community with an art form through education outreach needed to be explored. This often included trips abroad to Cuba and the USA where ventures like this were more reputable.

7.2 Research in Cuba

In order to put some of their ideas into action, Jaffray and Hackett visited companies and organisations that had already established outreach programmes. Jaffray (1992:748) clarifies: "We wanted to look at what had already been done to recruit newcomers, particularly children from ethnic minorities". They started their research in America and then travelled to Cuba³⁰. Jaffray (2010) describes their field research journey:

²⁹ British-born Baroness Tessa Ann Vosper Blackstone (1942–) is a Professor of Education Administration and a Labour politician in the House of Lords. She is a trustee of the Royal Opera House and "served as a chair of the Ballet Board of the Royal Opera House" (British Library, online 2016). She is currently the chair of the British Library and Great Ormond Street Hospital.

³⁰ The European tradition was embraced by the country and was originally popularised by former ballerina Alicia Alonso (1921–). She was born Alicia Ernestina de la Caridad del Cobre Martínez del Hoyo to father Antonio Martínez de Arredondo, a military officer, and mother Erenestina del Hoyo y Lugo. At the age of seven she took Spanish dancing whilst her father was stationed in Spain for seven months in 1928. When the family returned to Cuba, Alonso began ballet classes at Sociedad Pro Arte Musical in Havana. She studied with Russian ballet master Nicolai Yavorsky (1891–1947), a former pupil of Michael Fokine, who became director of the dance school from 1931–1939 (Siegel, 1979:12). In 1937 she married dancer Fernando Alonso (1914–2013), who she met at the school. They left Cuba for America to perform with George Balanchine's Ballet Caravan and then joined the Ballet Theatre (known as the American Ballet Theatre) in 1940. Alonso began to have problems with her eyesight, from which she suffered throughout her life, and after a number of unsuccessful operations these finally led to blindness, yet she continued to dance.

Alonso returned to perform with American Ballet Theatre from 1943 to 1948, and then left to return to Cuba and found the Alicia Alonso Ballet Company in 1948 with Fernando and her brother-in-law Alberto Alonso. The company was renamed Ballet de Cuba in 1955. From this time, she also performed with companies like Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo until 1959. When Fidel Castro (1926–) became prime minister of Cuba in 1959, Alonso changed the

Jane Hackett [...] until that point she was Birmingham Royal Ballet and she'd just given up that job and together we did a research trip to America because it was perceived that the Americans were that much further ahead. [...] We went to all those rich places and talked to people. One [we] looked at, what they'd done. Some of them had done quite a lot, Eliot Feld³¹ had done quite a lot.

Part of Jaffray and Hackett's journey was to research Cuba's outreach ballet programmes.

Ballet in Cuba is part of the education establishment and it is freely available to all who want to learn, from "kindergarten through university" (Andreatta and Ferraro, 2012:297). Former ballet dancer Alicia Alonso's experience as an international dancer brought a wealth of knowledge of ballet to her country. As John explains, "in light of the economic realities of dance, Alicia's accomplishments on the island would arguably have been impossible in a culture less attuned to dance and without the enthusiastic support of the government" (John, 2012:81). Jaffray (2010) further describes the rationale for this field research:

I didn't go, damn, because I had other things – Jane went to Cuba, because we thought this is the place, because they could do things none of the rest of us could. For a start, they had loads of dough because they put it into the arts. Lots of kids' families are poor and see this as a way out, because the funding is so fantastic. If you have a boy, you're not going to say, "Sorry, boys don't do ballet, it's sissy". It was a real way out like becoming a footballer or whatever. And they had the whole Russian training system. They were able to do what we were trying to do, plus they had all the money and they had a society that wanted it.

With Cuba's historical background and the existence of free ballet for all, it is easy to see how these ideas inspired Jaffray and Hackett to travel to Cuba to see if its methods could be adopted for creating CTD.

name of her company to Ballet Nacional de Cuba. Castro was extremely fond of ballet and was known to sponsor the company with "twice the \$100,000 Fernando calculate[d] [...] the company] needed to operate" (John, 2012:80). Dance scholar Suki John (2012:80) highlights the impact of this financing for the company: "With the support of the Revolutionary government, the Alonsos transformed their private Escuela Nacional de Ballet Alicia Alonso into a state-sponsored institution, La Escuela Provincial de Ballet de La Habana". John (2012:81–82) explains how Castro "gambled on the popular appeal of a traditionally elitist European art form, spearheaded by a genuine Cuban superstar. [...] Castro and the Alonsos united in making ballet accessible to audiences and potential students; they also re-branded ballet as a truly Cuban product that Cubans could be proud of". As another communist country, Cuba had strong support from the Soviet Union, and they shared similar ideas about the importance of ballet as an art form. John (2012:80) notes:

The idea that the arts could be central to the proletariat, not just to artists and intellectuals, fit with certain interpretations of Marxist theory. In both the USSR and Cuba, this meant including the arts as one of many resources to be distributed more equally. By popularizing a formerly inaccessible luxury, the Soviets reminded the population of their largesse. The same would later be true in Cuba.

³¹ American Eliot Feld (1943–) is a dancer, choreographer and director. He studied classical dance at the School of American Ballet, and modern dance at the High School for Performing Arts in New York. He was a dancer on Broadway and performed with the American Ballet Theatre from 1963 to 1968 until he formed his first company, American Ballet Company. It lasted for three years before a new company emerged: the Eliot Feld Ballet in 1972. This was an international success and was finally renamed Ballet Tech in 1997. In 1977, Feld founded the Ballet Tech outreach programme, which was a tuition-free dance school in New York where members of the company taught classes, and some of the students found employment in the company (Kassing, 2007:263).

7.2.1 Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH): An inspiration for the Royal Ballet

When Jaffray and Hackett were in America carrying out their field research, they found DTH's outreach programme, Arts Exposure, to be a very inspiring model for their project. The programme began in 1970, "giving lecture-demonstrations and small performances at public schools, colleges and universities to give the dancers experience in performing" (Dance Theatre of Harlem, 2016 online). Jaffray (2010) explains her feeling towards DTH's outreach programme:

Dance Theatre of Harlem had done huge amounts in terms of their ballet company. Their education, apart from the fact that they were based in Harlem, is quite a gift! I didn't think their education was good [...], because it kind of left it to people to say "I'd like to do that", rather than giving people a really deeper insight [into the art form]. I thought it was a bit old-fashioned and didactic. But they took some dancers out, they danced and it was "Isn't it fantastic!" However, they had the role models that we didn't. So I did battle with Arthur Mitchell and he'd say, "Now we'll do it this way". Scary, all his dancers were like "Uh, she's calling him Arthur for a start! He's a god". So we came to the agreement that we would run the project [CTD] together. Because to me, just to say "the Dance Theatre of Harlem and the Royal Ballet", wow!

It is important to note that after a tour of South Africa, DTH was inspired to create another outreach scheme, Dancing Through Barriers, founded in Washington, DC in 1992, a year after CTD was founded. Its "comprehensive arts education programs offer a range of activities that include, in-class residencies, school-time performances, after school programs and interactive tours of the DTH facility" (Dance Theatre of Harlem, 2016 online). Dance scholars Leslie Norton and Frederic Franklin³² (2007:188) describe how DTH's outreach worked in:

[...] all of New York City's boroughs, Detroit, and Miami, introducing sixty thousand children yearly to the art and discipline of dance. DTH members worked with local schools, colleges, and universities via classes and lecture-demonstrations. In lec-dem [lecture-demonstration], Mitchell would often ask children to come onstage and do the dances they were familiar with – usually some style of hip-hop. Much to their surprise, he then broke the steps down to their essential components, showing them how similar the steps are to those of classical ballet. With its determined efforts in arts education, the Dance Theatre of Harlem played a major role in drawing new audiences to dance.

³² British dancer Frederic Franklin (1914–2013) studied dance in Liverpool and trained with dance teachers like Nikolai Legat. In 1931 he performed cabaret with dancer Josephine Baker at the Casino de Paris (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:180). He worked in London as a soloist with the Markova-Dolin company between 1935 and 1937. He was also a principal dancer in 1938 with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, which led him to be promoted to ballet master in 1944. Franklin often performed with the Sadler's Wells Ballet as a guest dancer. "In 1952 he founded the Slavenka-Franklin ballet with Mia Slavenska, touring the US and the Far East. [...] He worked as director or adviser with many companies including American Ballet Theatre (1961) National Ballet Washington, DC, and its associated school (1962–74) [...] for many companies, such as Dance Theatre of Harlem for whom he staged their Creole version of *Giselle* (1984)" (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:180). It is evident that Franklin had a wealth of experience from working with European and American ballet companies, as well as working with African American artists like Baker and the company DTH.

It is likely that DTH and the Royal Ballet inspired each other through the development of their outreach programmes. Jaffray points out that the project needed to attract dancers from ethnic minorities and therefore black role models in the field of ballet were required.

Fortunately, DTH had a pool of African American classically trained dancers who were already role models and who could assist with the development of the project. She clarifies:

“We were aware that role models would be important and so were delighted when Arthur Mitchell agreed that Dance Theatre of Harlem would collaborate with the Royal Ballet on the project” (Jaffray, 1992:749). But why did Jaffray and Hackett have to go to America for black role models? Where were the black British role models in ballet to assist with this project?

Jaffray (2010) explains, with reference to this situation:

I would have had the role models if there were [any]. To teach, I couldn't find them or I'd seen them teach and didn't think they were any better than [the ones we already had]. None of the teachers were from the Royal Ballet. Darren [Panton] was the only one that went through the Royal Ballet School. Brenda [Garrett-Glassman] went to the Royal Ballet School, but danced with the Dance Theatre of Harlem. I only met Brenda because she went to school with Jane Hackett. There were a couple of other people who all wrote me rude letters, saying “Why haven't you chosen me?” If anybody had been a good teacher, [if a] role model had walked in, I would have said “yes” to them like that, bitten their hand off! We just couldn't find them. You know there's all this publicity, you'd think somebody [would have] thought, “Why aren't I part of that?” If they'd spoken to me, come and visited, whatever.

Although Jaffray states that there were no black British role models at the time the project was established, the collaboration with DTH dancers would eventually become problematic because of cultural differences and ballet styles. The black British dancers mentioned by Jaffray would later go on to teach in the programme.

7.2.2 CTD Programme and DTH collaboration

In April 1991, artistic directors Arthur Mitchell and Anthony Dowell signed a two-year agreement to “help diversify the London troupe [...] modelled on DTH's outreach program Arts Exposure” (Dance Theatre of Harlem, 2016 online). Jaffray (1992:749) gives an overview of the project's launch:

In October 1991 the project was launched with a series of lecture demonstrations in schools in [the] Lambeth and Hammersmith and Fulham areas of London. Cassandra Phifer-Moore (DTH) and I compèred and Fiona Chadwick from the Royal Ballet and Richard Witter from Dance Theatre of Harlem danced extracts from a variety of ballets.

She gives an insight into how the working relationship between DTH and the CTD

programme developed to create the project:

We had dancers and they sent dancers to work with the Royal Ballet and also a presenter, because either way, how can we say, "This is for you", or if you have black dancers with a white presenter, what message does that send? So we did it together. It was a bit of a laugh because we're just so different. I presented with Sandi [Cassandra Phifer-Moore]. She was a principal dancer with the Dance Theatre of Harlem. She would say, "And now we're going to do a [shout] plié!" It was a cultural clash, because Americans are so different. It took ages and ages to put together, but what I felt was necessary, was that we needed role models. We needed to show children what ballet was, because if they didn't see it, they didn't know. It had to be inclusive so we couldn't just say, "We're going to talk only [to] black children". [...]

Sandi from Dance Theatre of Harlem had lots of arguments. We got on very, very well, but when it came to the children, I wanted to prove a point. It's a very fine balance between just saying this is the stereotype of ballet [...] so everyone is going to fit into that mould, and saying we're completely going to break the mould and [we don't have to prove] anything to anybody. So I wanted to have children that could do ballet. You know, who were flexible and energetic and she was like, "Oh, look at the kid who just loves to dance, but he's got turned in toes". She wanted to challenge the stereotypes really quite far. We had a lot of those discussions. (Jaffray, 2010)

Though DTH collaborated on the project with the Royal Ballet artistically and by providing role models, Jaffray implies that there were cultural differences in their methods of teaching ballet and therefore further deliberations and adjustments to the project were needed. She notes in particular that DTH were meant to participate in more performances with the Royal Ballet Company to illustrate their integration on a professional level.

Probably one of the most important parts of the project nobody even thinks about or talks about these days, was that there was an agreement that only half worked – that artists would swap [...] as well as doing the demonstrations [...]. Dancers from Dance Theatre of Harlem danced with the Royal Ballet [and] did Giselle. [...] It was very difficult [...]. To be honest, [the] dancers weren't always quite at the same [level] technically and that's really dangerous because that can send a message, but you know, but it still happened. There was a black sugar plum fairy, a black Giselle and the sky didn't fall. It was the start. (Jaffray, 2010)

Principal dancers Christina Johnson and Ronald Perry performed with the Royal Ballet's Nutcracker at the Royal Opera House in December 1990. Media reports by The Guardian (Pascal, 1990:8) or the The New York Times (Cassidy, 1990) did not mention that the performance was part of the CTD scheme.

The first programme of Chance to Dance involved this exchange of professional dancers and this [Chance to Dance Programme]. And it was me going to New York and talking to Arthur Mitchell and saying we want to do this, this, this, that, that happened. There was a gap, partially because it was so expensive to bring these dancers over from America. To be honest, Dance Theatre of Harlem was going through a really tricky financial time. We were paying not only for them to come, [but also ...] for their accommodation while they were here, all of that. We were paying their salary that they would have been getting with Dance Theatre of Harlem if they'd been there, plus the fees for Chance to Dance, so it was huge. So the Royal Ballet at the end just couldn't

afford it. So the next couple of years after that we had Sandi and some of her team came to kind of present and programme, but we couldn't afford to pay the dancers and nobody went back. (Jaffray, 2010)

Due to the lack of racially diverse role models in British ballet, Jaffray and Hackett thought that DTH's outreach programme and dancers, who were African American, could influence the British multi-cultured community to allow their children to participate in free classes offered by the Royal Ballet. Therefore, it could be argued that DTH reflected the target audience for the outreach programme, and aided in its aim to attract more young children from the African diaspora to participate in ballet. The collaboration of the two companies helped to raise the Royal Ballet's profile in terms of portraying cultural diversity; nevertheless, as Jaffray mentions, many of the dancers from DTH were not able to perform with the company due to 'technical' differences.

7.3 Organising the Chance to Dance scheme

Project managing the scheme not only took time to research and structure, but each section had to be carefully analysed and coordinated with the appropriate contacts to ensure the initial stages operated as smoothly as possible. Jaffray (2010) describes the preliminary stages of planning and working with the schools, children, parents, staff and so forth:

When I set up Chance to Dance I didn't say all the reasons why I was doing it. For community [...] There are other things that I couldn't have said, otherwise I couldn't get funding, so there's all that underneath.

With Chance to Dance, in the first year nobody wanted it. I have a London paper clipping saying "Nuts to Nutcracker". You know, "Kids in Brixton don't want to do ballet [...] off to Royal Opera House". So I thought, that's really helpful, how do they know? You know, if one child wants to do ballet and we give them the chance, that's worth it, actually. But it's the assumption that ballet is for somebody else, it's posh, it's elitist, it's an elite art form. It's down to these kids to decide if they want to [dance] and if they say it's boring, fine, but you have to at least give them a chance to see it. So there was a lot of struggle.

Jaffray was initially in constant battle trying to engage the local community with the project because, as she describes, they had preconceived perceptions, such as the class status of ballet. She refers to the support of professional people who helped to launch the project.

Luckily, there was a brilliant person who was then director of education. [...] He was good, he was brilliant. He believed in it and he really supported us. And he virtually said [to] the schools, "You will do it". And some of them were enthusiastic and some of them were not.

There was also a good person in Hammersmith and Fulham, who believed in it. Now we only went to Hammersmith and Fulham as a second area because we were going to do a lot of work in that sort of area. Paddington, we thought that would be perfect and we had links with them. But [they] weren't going to do it because [they] believed that we were targeting black children and felt that it's not targeting all the children [...]. I was actually really cross and spoke to this woman Christine Watford, who was then the director of education. She said, "If he won't have it, I'll have it, it's great for us!" So we went to Hammersmith and Fulham and I said, "We can't have it in Fulham, but if it's based in White City it would be perfect". Because we wanted it to be in an area with huge ethnic diversity, of course! [...]

So it started off with just Lambeth, Hammersmith and Fulham. So we did a lot of work, we did a teachers' evening all at the end of the academic year. It was going to be launched with all the teachers in the school participat[ing] – at that point [it was] 20 schools. [We] showed them ballet, talked about the project, gave them a dancer's voice, whatever. But actually, they were all quite enthusiastic and they said, "Oh yes, we think our kids would love it".
(Jaffray, 2010)

Two years after the scheme was established in 1991, "the number of schools participating [had] virtually doubled, Lambeth increasing from eight to 16 and Hammersmith & Fulham from seven to 13" (Clarke, 1993:169). In 2007, 46 schools participated in the London boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark, Hammersmith and Fulham (Wilce, 2007), although currently, according to the Royal Opera House (ROH) website, only 24 primary schools in Thurrock and the London boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark are still participating (ROH, 2016) – a drop of half the number of participating schools over nine years.

7.3.1 Planning for the children

When engaging with the children for this programme, it had to be made appealing to them in order for them to feel comfortable. Jaffray (2010) explains some of the planning and processes that were made to tailor the project to the children's needs:

We had to make it really possible for them to do it. So we couldn't put financial problems in the way [...] We had to say, "You can wear a t-shirt, you can wear cycle shorts". We had male role models. Surprisingly, after the demo and when we said to the kids "[Who] would like to do ballet?" it wasn't always the girls. [...] We [...] went out into the various communities and showed them and did this, [...] If you're in their school hall it was fine, so that was important, that the classes were likewise local, so that they could walk from school [...].

The aim of the project is to provide talented children from the ages of seven to eleven from diverse backgrounds with the opportunity to attend free ballet classes. At the age of eleven children can then make the choice to attend vocational schools, or if very talented they could also audition for schools like the Royal Ballet's Junior Associates (JA). Jaffray (2010) describes how they devised the age range:

We specifically targeted younger children, partly because they're more open minded and also because if they wanted to do ballet, they can progress better through the system. [There are] too many children at the age of 14 saying "I really want to give it a go". [It's] too late. So I wanted to avoid that.

Jaffray (2010) explains the next stages of progression for the children who attend the classes:

So [we] did all that work and then when it actually came to it, we went into the schools, we did presentation[s] with the dancers and we did workshops with the children. All the children that saw it did workshops. Yes, well, it was an audition. We were a bit sloppy really, we wanted to have them all. We took on too many and we also took on children who were never going to make it as dancers. You live and learn.

Dance critic Mary Clarke (1923–2015) (1993:169) reviewed the programme and describes the audition process:

Through a selection process which takes place at the schools, where the children perform a few simple exercises, are judged by physique and enthusiasm and given enough hopping, skipping and jumping at the end to give them an idea of what fun dancing can be, result in a group of approximately 50 young people being offered two years' free tuition and dancewear.

Whilst training, the children are provided with uniforms and ballet shoes from major subsidiaries in the field of dance accessories, including sponsors like "Julienne & Porselli, Arabesque Leotards and Sportswear, while Freed's are providing ballet shoes. This generosity means that the children were properly attired for their classes at no cost to their families" (Clarke, 1993:171). The children can visit the ROH, and attend workshops and theatre visits. Jaffray (2010) describes the diversity of places they could visit:

We took them on outings, we took them to see the ballet, we took them to see some of the major schools, so we took them to Arts Ed [performing arts academy] and to various places to watch other young people dancing. So loads and loads of stuff we did for those children, so it was really quite a nice experience for them.

The children also got to perform at the Linbury Theatre at the ROH for their summer performance, and their enthusiasm for a CTD performance is shared by Jaffray (2010):

The parents saw it [the programme] as a chance for their children to do things because it wasn't just like ballet classes, the children got to perform at the Opera House. If there was ever a role the child would try to do, we'd try to get them into it.

A Chance to Dance performance is great! It's proper, they have costumes, they have a set, they have [an] orchestra, the whole bit. They have dancers from the Royal Ballet taking part [in] it. So it's great for them to have those opportunities. And to see parents whistling and shouting is fantastic! Because then they can't say ballet isn't for them, if they've been part of the audience and they've seen their child as part of it and they've seen professional dancers. And the dancers that we choose are brilliant with the children and they're great role models. So yes, for the children on the whole

and for the parents, I suppose most of the schools have [been] challenged [...]

Jaffray highlights the endless planning and events that made the CTD scheme work, including donations from major dance establishments like Porselli and performing at the ROH. However, not all children that wanted to participate could partake, and many encountered social and economic circumstances that hindered their progression and enjoyment of these classes.

7.4 Social deprivation and economic background

While examining the social deprivation and economic background of these children is important to help explain why potential black students may have difficulty entering the ballet profession, it is beyond the scope of this study to engage in this very complex social analysis and therefore it can only be considered for future research. Jaffray (2010) explains that despite her efforts in trying to get some children scholarships for performing arts schools, she was aware of the restraints of the social and economic circumstances that they experienced:

They all stopped doing it because again, it's [...] that thing of, if you live in Brixton and you're dealing with families who haven't got a home, how can you say we need to put money towards sending four children to an elite ballet school? So it's really difficult. That's the reason that it's not happening, you're fighting against the system, and it's really difficult unless you can get a lot of funding.

I did have several privately funded individuals who did pay for their children to go to school. A very nice woman became a mother to two very nice girls. Even when they get a scholarship they still need more money. They need to pay for their parents to visit them or for them to come over at the weekend. This woman did loads, she brought them all those things you need if you're going to become an artist. It needs more than any one person can do, resources.

Matthew Paluch (2014), a white former dancer with the Royal Ballet, gives his account of working for the project as a teacher from 2008 to 2011, and refers to the social deprivation in Peckham, South London where he worked:

I taught two to three years, [but my] memories [are] not the best. I was offered the job and the person who offered me the job I respected massively and I was a very young teacher. I think that she felt that my levels of expertise and experience in relation to my persona was the right balance for the programme. [...] I was based in Peckham – that was my satellite centre. The catchment area was Southwark. All the children that came to Peckham were at stage schools in Southwark. They came to us in year three at primary school. It was a three-year course.

There were a lot of kids coming from different ethnic backgrounds. The home education, mode of discipline etc., etc., was different. Their parental situation was different. Some of the kids were second generation, some were third or fourth generation. For example, it would be different if that child's parents had moved to this country, compared to that child's parent being second generation, things would be different if you know what I mean, in their protocol, in their cultural understanding in reference to education. It would be a massive difference depending on what school they came from. If you had a kid coming from Dog Kennel Hill, which is basically in Dulwich and just in the Southwark catchment area, [and] a kid coming from a really, really inner-city Peckham school, [it would be] completely different. Don't matter where their parents or grand-parents came from, you knew exactly where that child was from in relation to their school.

Paluch had in-depth insight into the cultural diversity of the children who attended his classes in the London Borough of Southwark. For example, children from the leafy suburb of Dulwich and those from inner-city Peckham schools were from contrasting social classes. Paluch (2014) encountered social deprivation on many levels, which made the work challenging, as he explains:

It was very hard work because [...] the ethos of the programme is to make a level of training accessible to a student that would not normally have access to that level of training. So therefore you weren't getting, you know the kind of child that wouldn't necessarily do ballet on a regular basis. That can be problematic because sometimes that kind of child isn't used to a certain level of discipline or a certain type of education. They were coming from very diverse cultural backgrounds where discipline is instilled in very different ways. So therefore some of the children didn't recognise the discipline the way we were [using it, and] communicating it could be problematic.

For Paluch the role of a teacher was exceeded by other duties outside his job. He explains:

There were elements of Chance to Dance that were exhausting. There were things you had to do, like excursions, day trips. I did feel that quite a lot pastoral care could be demanding, and that they asked quite a lot from me time-wise, responsibility-wise, which I don't have a problem doing. I'm not a chaperone, I'm a skilled worker if that makes sense, and I suddenly found myself in a kind of babysitting role, which hacked me actually. I didn't mind doing it because I loved the kids, but it's kind of stressful being left with twenty-five kids, incredibly energetic nine-year-olds in a sports centre in Peckham.

You couldn't rely on some of the parents, because some of the parents [came] an hour and a half after pickup time. I wasn't being paid for that. [...] And I didn't really want that level of responsibility. I found that really stressful. You'd always get a jobsworth at Peckham Plex telling you that you weren't meant to be there, and I was like, "I'm aware of that". I can't go on the street, this child is younger than ten, you know what I mean, leave me alone! (Paluch, 2014)

Some of the parents who took advantage of Paluch's lessons, seeing them as free childcare, may not have had any concept of the value of time-keeping, in comparison to parents who had paid for ballet classes. Paluch (2014) reflects on some scenarios that children may experience before or after attending class with their parents as a result of social deprivation:

Yes, there were aspects that I found exhausting. I had to report this back. The programme is a very special programme and the child in question could be incredibly

gifted, [but] where do those boundaries start and where do they stop? You know, perhaps that child's parents [were] in a world of trouble themselves, it is quite difficult. Some of them would turn up in [a] school uniform that to me looked like it hadn't been washed for months. For real! [...] Some of the kids [who] were coming, we're talking real serious inner-city council estates, big time! Talking from a tower block.

Sometimes the session was an hour long and they'd turn up [for] the last fifteen minutes – that was a big tick for some of them. But the ones we were trying to keep and the parents we were trying to make them understand that it's imperative that you bring the child regardless [of whether] the child comes for five minutes in their school uniform. They need to know that they have a responsibility to be here each week because we're here each week, the musician's here each week, we have the studio each week. The world doesn't stop, the world keeps going regardless of how traumatic their week is. For some of them it was probably the only thing they had each week which was the same. Sorry to be dramatic, they might have had a different father figure or mother figure each week, but they would go and their ballet teacher would be the same and hopefully be an example of continuity and calm and respect, expectance, etc. etc.

We were paid well [...] They chose the right people, that's all I can say, the education department at the Opera House is a group of very, very capable people and they really do know what they're doing, I would say 99% of the time. Anything that's worthwhile tends to be hard work, sadly.

Paluch encountered a multitude of examples of cultural deprivation among children and parents in Southwark during his work as a teacher. He also performed more roles than his job description included, such as carer, counsellor and above all a creative artist. Jaffray (2010) provides another view of the different children she encountered on the programme, comparing their upbringing, experiences in ballet classes and education:

The jump between a boy or girl growing up in Brixton, maybe from a middle-class background, maybe not, is so great if you go to the Royal Ballet School or Tring or any [of those schools] is huge! Because those people don't – and this is where I did fail really – they don't make allowances, they don't say, "Yes, this child can really dance beautifully". Maybe their academic standard isn't quite so good or their behaviour is a bit different. [...] Most of the kids that go to [the Royal Ballet] at the very least, go to a little local primary school and lots of them have been to prep schools or whatever. If you see the school that this little girl goes to, I've been to that school, you're lucky if she can read at all, let alone be two years behind or whatever. So that's the ethos, the culture within those organisations.

It is quite overwhelming to review Paluch's and Jaffray's shared experiences of social and economic deprivation among children in the CTD programme. In spite of the programme's aims to reach and teach children from diverse backgrounds, the social environment is one element that can hinder their progression towards a career in ballet. It would be interesting for future research to compare the experiences of London children from deprived backgrounds with those of underprivileged children in Cuba, where ballet is free and there are more dancers who may succeed. A parallel study by dance scholar Jill Green also investigated a dance outreach community programme in the United States for 9–13-year-old

girls, and despite the project being a creative outlet and source of enjoyment for the students, she discovered that social and emotional problems such as “financial worries, divorce, abuse” (Green, 2000:59) were similarly affecting the students’ attendance. Social deprivation is world-wide and community projects can only provide an opportunity for creative enjoyment or inspiration to children, who in some cases can make a prospective career if they are very talented.

7.5 Chance to Dance and access to joining ballet companies for children

After two years of completing training and receiving a diploma, children from these classes are then nominated by dance teachers to audition for vocational dance schools – either ballet or performing arts institutions throughout Britain – with the hope of obtaining a scholarship to further their careers in the industry. The highs and lows of organising the final stages of the course and the establishment of associations with dance institutions for potential students to audition are described by Jaffray (2010):

Even within my team there were lots of arguments and discussions about what we were doing, why, how and so on, let alone outside the team. Half of those things didn’t get to committees or boards for discussion, it was like, “Haven’t you done well, dear”. But yes, we were trying to push boundaries and I was trying to make links so very early on. We made links with The Place, The Young Place [the London Contemporary Dance School]. It was great for children who weren’t going the ballet route and they’ve been brilliant, they’ve given loads of scholarships and still do so. And some of the children have gone right through that programme, so there was that. Links with Arts Ed, because I thought creative kids could go there, because I knew they were going to have a music and ballet school opening there and because it’s a bit of a side track.

They have to get a scholarship. The Royal Opera House, [...] my education budget [...], now that’s been cut as well. They have to get the music and ballet scheme scholarship. The one that there is for Hammersmith, [...] those children are all competing against each other [for it]. There might be one other child or two other children and there are ten Chance to Dance children all competing against each other and one of them gets it. They’ll all get into Arts Ed or Tring or somewhere like that. Can they go? No, unless we find funding for them. Some people were really good, the woman who’s not alive anymore but was the director of Urdang Academy [Leonie Urdang], completely nutty, but she had such a good heart. She took loads of children and Arts and Tring did their best, tick.

Jaffray (2010) also explains some of the parameters of the CTD programme:

There are quite a few children that go through the schools, but sometimes you don’t hear about it, they lose touch. Three dancers have become professional ballet dancers from the Chance to Dance scheme. A lot have found employment, but the project is quite tiny really. It sounds massive in terms of going to those schools, but if that had been my sole aim I would have got funding to set up a fleet of ballet schools. I wasn’t being employed by the Royal Ballet, but being employed by the Royal Opera House.

That wasn't my job to set up Royal Ballet Schools, [but] that would have been the way to do it. My aim was to avoid the fourteen-year-old that would say, "I'd like to learn ballet". It's too late, so by getting those children to a stage where they could then go on, once they got to ten or eleven that's it, I can't do anything more.

In an earlier quote from Jaffray (1992:48), she states: "We wanted to devise a programme which would, in the long term, enlarge the pool of talent from which the Royal Ballet recruits its dancers". It could be argued that her early vision could not be achieved because of the limitations of the programme and the community she encountered, as described above.

Journalist Hilary Wilce (2007) reported on the CTD programme, providing an overview of its achievements:

More than a thousand children have so far learnt ballet this way, and a handful have gone on into professional training. At the last count, 29 students had managed to get into vocational dance schools with the help of grants and bursaries, while one dancer, Shevelle Dynott, became the first Chance To Dance dancer to go to the Royal Ballet Upper School and join the English National Ballet. More than 40 students have joined the Royal Ballet School's associates' programme, while 50 have gained places at the Central School of Ballet and the contemporary dance centre, The Young Place. Chance to Dance graduates have also performed in a number of West End shows including The Lion King and Saturday Night Fever.

The last stages of the CTD scheme prepared students with a grounded knowledge of ballet to further their careers in ballet and other dance and performing arts fields. Although Wilce's 2007 report provides numbers on students that pursued careers in dance, only one dancer at the time, Dynott, was reported to have joined a major ballet company.

7.6 Reflecting on CTD

Jaffray (2010) made several topical comments with reference to the programme, and concludes with some summarising statements:

Right from the beginning I wanted the parents to be involved. We'd talk to the parents about what it was, [...] all about that stuff. Even if the child doesn't become a ballet dancer, twenty years from now, somebody turns on the television and it's ballet, "Oh, I did that!" So I wanted it to have a bigger impact [...].

The comment above describes how one of Jaffray's aims for the programme was to increase knowledge and enjoyment of ballet among parents and children, and her hopes that the shared experience would become a common practice rather than a selected familiarity only available to children that could afford to take ballet classes. On a larger scale, Jaffray

aspired to have a pool of black dancers with the aesthetics and bodies ready for a career ballet – similar to DTH. She explains:

I think I was willing to sacrifice, early on, quite a lot of other principles to get children, because I thought, if I can bring in beautiful children, flat backs, pointed feet, then nobody's going to say, "No, they don't have the right bodies". Once you've had several of those, then it's gone, nobody can challenge you, they still do anyway. I was hoping to get beautiful, beautiful children, sure they can [dance], it's not to do with your skin.
(Jaffray, 2010)

While it was one of Jaffray's aspirations to create an environment where dancers were trained through the CTD programme without discrimination based on the colour of their skin, she explains that people still have perceptions about the black body, although opinions in ballet companies are changing. She describes the impact that CTD has had: it "has changed some thinking within the ballet companies, [and has] enable[d] more children, [...] back then, [who] wouldn't even [have had] a chance. So we're way beyond that now. In the long run that wasn't my major aim, but it has changed their thinking" (Jaffray, 2010). Jaffray explains the effect that CTD had on ballet institutions over the past twenty years, and whilst more needs to be done, the impact of the programme has been considerable.

Within the world of ballet, maybe not all of the changes I would have liked are done in twenty years. Chance to Dance has been running [for] twenty years. Yes, the Royal Ballet has more black dancers. Certainly the people who are there at the moment, the director, the assistant director, the company manager, the main artistic team are much more open minded.

Chance to Dance for us was big, but given the number of children studying ballet in Britain, let alone the world, it's a pin prick, that's why in a way it's extraordinary that we got anybody through to the Royal Ballet School, because all the children in the world want to go to [...] Kirov, Royal Ballet School, there are not many places they want to go and they [the schools] can take their pick. So we can go to twenty schools in Lambeth and twenty schools in Southwark and sent through two children a year to the Royal Ballet School, it's extraordinary really, so don't anybody tell me that there isn't talent there.

Now if the government truly, truly wanted to change and the Arts Council said, "This is so important", they could do it, they could say, "Let's take Chance to Dance as a model, let's make it better, make it nationwide and make it Chance to Play, Chance to Drama", so that all these forms are truly, truly inclusive. But it's not going to happen, yet.
(Jaffray, 2010)

Over the twenty years that Jaffray has worked on CTD, she has accomplished many of her aims: to develop a programme where children from diverse backgrounds can experience free ballet classes; to highlight ballet in schools and to parents; and to enlighten ballet companies on the prospects of future racial integration.

7.7 British dance teachers

The financial strain of funding dancers from DTH for the CTD programme eventually became too much for the Royal Ballet; nevertheless, the need for black dance role models in Britain was still pressing. As previously mentioned by Jaffray, the Royal Ballet advertised jobs for these roles but they found it was very difficult to find suitable dancers for the positions.

Brenda Garratt-Glassman became the first black British dancer to work on the programme and she was a former dancer and teacher with DTH (BBC World Service, 2001 online).

Jaffray (2010) mentions some of the other black dancers who were employed on the scheme:

About six have been employed. People have come and gone. I brought in quite a lot of people to teach the odd classes. The main ones were Brenda [Garrett-Glassman] Michael Moor, Darren [Panton] and others [who] sort of come and go. Patrick [Lewis], there were lots of times I had him in the office complaining about parents complaining. He wants to do the right things, but he can't always do it.

What I think happens partly, putting all the prejudice and things aside, there are some people who are willing to go through all sorts, and [then there are] the sensible people [who] say, "I'm not putting up with this, I'm off." So the very people who probably could change things opt out, and quite rightly.

Evan [Williams] had done quite a lot for me when he was in the school. In his last year he went out in the community with Adam Cooper³³. Both of them were mean choreographers as well. [...] I said, "Please, please, please", usually I wasn't allowed to use Royal Ballet students in the education programme because they were getting trained, but they agreed.

It was very difficult for Jaffray to find the right dancer with the necessary attitude to work on the programme, without becoming too personally affected by some of the social and economic situations that they encountered amongst children from diverse backgrounds, especially black children. Former dancer of the Swedish Ballet and English National Ballet

Patrick Lewis reflects on teaching the classes on the CTD programme:

"It's challenging work," says Lewis, who also teaches at the Royal Academy of Dance, "but challenging in a positive way. You have to be more flexible in how you teach classes like this. The students have to learn listening skills and concentration, and the parents have to be supportive as well. We can find that parents are oblivious of everything that's going on until something goes wrong".

(Lewis, quoted in Wilce, 2007 online)

³³ Adam Cooper (1971–) is a dancer, choreographer, actor and theatre director. He trained at the Royal Ballet School and joined the company in 1989, rising through the ranks to principal dancer in 1994. He performed in Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake* in 1995 and has performed and created many works as an artist (Cooper, 2016 online).

Darren Panton also explained that the impact of his experience working on the programme became apparent when he realised how important it was for him to be there as a role model and as a representative for dancers of the Royal Ballet Company. His presence was symbolic for the black British community. He did not understand why more black dancers were not employed on the programme. However, as mentioned above, Jaffray could not find dancers who were adaptable enough for the requirements of the programme at the time. Panton also said it was important for him to go to schools in Peckham and Brixton, because other dancers were apprehensive about going into the areas in case they were attacked or robbed (Panton, 2008). Areas like Peckham and Brixton in South London have a high population of people from the African and Caribbean diaspora living in the vicinity, but there is also the notion that the crime rate is higher amongst these communities³⁴.

Malachi Spaulding³⁵ also referred to working on the CTD programme as a trained teacher. He taught drumming and percussion with the CTD team as a part of the programme activities for one year, although he did not specify what year. He gives his opinion on the project:

I think the scheme is good, it is giving the opportunity for ballet to go and look for talent in their catchment areas. It's a chance for young black aspiring dancers to get a chance to do the training at the Royal Ballet School, [...]. There was a lot of talent there, the fact that they were highlighting that talent at that age and they could take them on in schools was really good. With ballet you have to be training at a younger age for your bones to form. (Spaulding, 2011)

Spaulding refers to one of CTD's success stories – Shevelle Dynott's training from an early age in Brixton, South London on the scheme. Dynott later attended the RBS and found employment with the ENB. Spaulding (2011) was impressed with Dynott and expresses his enthusiasm:

Shevelle paved the way like himself, to literally go on and train. He's a role model now. I think that it's good that somebody's in there. Let's wait and see what he's going to do now to promote other students like himself to go on and do a career in ballet.

³⁴ "Crime deprivation is measured using rates of violence; burglary; theft; and criminal damage. The Black African group have the highest proportion living in neighbourhoods with high crime rates, at 26 per cent. This reflects the concentration of this group in South and East London and other large cities" (Jivraj and Simpson, 2015:206).

³⁵ Malachi Spaulding trained at the Ballet Rambert School and has a Bachelor of Performing Arts degree from the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. Malachi performed with the Vienna Festival Ballet as a soloist and has an extensive employment history as an artist performing in West End productions and with key dance practitioners from the African Dance Diaspora. He founded his company 'Shanturia' in 1992 (Shanturia Dance Theatre, 2010 online).

Lewis, Panton, Spaulding and Paluch have all shared their experiences of working on the CTD programme, but they also presented themselves as role models and (Paluch excepted) contributed to Jaffray's vision of promoting multiculturalism on the British ballet stage. Did their roles as racial representatives on the CTD programme give a false sense of reality, or hope for the future? This issue will be discussed further in the conclusion. Paluch shares an overview of his experience working on the programme as a white male artist:

The programme is unparalleled in that sense. But with that comes other problems. So as enjoyable as it was, it was also as difficult. But it was also about the team of teachers. The period when I was there, it was run by incredible people, the members of faculty were incredible in general. They were the right people. It was so holistic, it was so much bigger than what it was. That relationship with the Opera House was incredible.

Paluch (2014) describes his experience with the parents and children:

When I did Chance to Dance, I never had a problem with parents. The parents were great. The majority of the parents knew that what the Opera House was offering was an incredible experience for their kids, so they were often very thankful, very humble. I know there are horror stories, but because their kids were selected I think the parents were very calm, because they knew they didn't have to promote their child, because their child had been selected anyway. It was a gift for the talented. All that kind of bolstering was already out of the way. [...]

Some of them [the children] grabbed it by the horns and couldn't get enough. Some of the boys really resisted when they first came. Some of them we managed to turn around, some of them we didn't. Some of them had to be excluded and asked to leave because they just couldn't get it together behaviour-wise. There was a real kind of official structure for that and it wasn't something that was rushed. It was over a six-month period. But if it wasn't feasible, it wasn't feasible, they were being so distracting, I just wanted the group to go forward. For us, the colour of skin was irrelevant, [...] depend[ing] on their previous education, whether or not they could turn around in a six-month period and if they couldn't, it just wasn't an option because it was at the detriment of the other nineteen students. It's so difficult, because exclusion is the last resort and it happened very rarely. I think in my time, there was only one boy that we had to sort of say, "This is not going to work out".

It is evident that discipline in the classroom was an important part of the programme and guidelines were put in place for students who misbehaved. Paluch (2014) shares the highlights of the scheme:

The positives about that programme were that we were only being offered a very small pool of [children], if that makes sense. We were really able to experience that age of that population in London. We were able to give the opportunity to the right child. So that wouldn't always be the aesthetically, physically appropriate child. But it would be the child that would have an insane level of coordination, natural movement, innate dynamic, which to me is a dancer. Not necessarily a ballet dancer, but is a dancer and that's more important anyway.

Paluch implies that natural ability rather than aesthetic physique makes a dancer. In ballet, as mentioned earlier in Chapter One, having the required aesthetic and ballet body is what mainly contributes to the student becoming a dancer. He explains:

The programme is not about getting children into training at eleven, and the Opera House are incredibly clear about that. Sadly, these things morph very quickly and that is the word on the street. It's very much about excellence, but it's not about excellence in relation to vocational training. What we do is very much about what we did in the room each day, each week. [...] There are so many options from [age] eleven for them. [...] For me, I wasn't interested in getting those kids into White Lodge [Royal Ballet Upper School] at all. I wanted them to come every week. I wanted them to have a refined knowledge of coordination, musical appreciation, discipline, spatial awareness, choreography, theatre, you know, stage direction, all those fabulous, fabulous things that ballet and theatre can offer. You know, White Lodge is like a pin prick, [a] fabulous pin prick, but that's not necessary for people to really understand and really appreciate what's it's really all about, I don't think?

I think the selection process is the only con, because that is a negative experience for those that don't make it. It's done quite simply and quite swiftly, [but] still [it] is quite depressing. The pros are limitless, I've said most of them, it just keeps going. You can offer the world, but the individual has to be there to receive it. But I think in general the selection process is correct and those children are there for a reason. They were incredibly bright young people, so for them it didn't feel like a chore, they wanted to be there.
(Paluch, 2014)

Paluch's experience of working on the CTD programme is very similar to Lewis's or Edwards, for example. The scheme is very challenging and the individuals employed have to adapt to working at professional standards and make compromises based on the changing attitudes of diverse groups, as was experienced by Jaffray and Paluch.

7.8 Organisations and equal opportunities

The Equal Opportunities Acts were instituted to regulate official policies that organisations are required to follow in order to ensure that individuals are treated equally and not discriminated against due to their age, gender, race or disability (Equal Opportunities Act, online 2016). Jaffray (2010) shares her working experience with organisations and their perceptions of equal opportunities:

Not all the teachers go on courses. The teachers have to sign up to the equal opportunities policy and all of those things. But they don't necessarily have to go. People at a higher level do, they should do. The problem is the way those organisations work and I know this now from bitter experience. It's not like a normal organisation where you have a CEO, and you have various people and then you have your teachers. If somebody has done ballet, tap, modern since they were four, qualify for a teacher at eighteen, teachers then go on to get a licence examiner, maybe they get on the board, get to be a board person within the organisation. They've just been on that track, so doing whatever dance, [...] at five, to being an examiner you haven't really

done all that much to challenge people's preconceptions because you've always been with people like you. So it's very, very, difficult.

Equal opportunity policies are in place with many organisations as required by law. Jaffray's interpretation is that the structure of dance organisations is created by individuals whose learnt experience is developed from an early age, from being part of the system. They are promoted to higher positions – sometimes without qualifications – to managerial or directorship roles, hence producing generations of individuals whose behaviour becomes institutionalised. Examples of dancers who became directors of the same institution they trained at are former Royal Ballet School Directors Merle Park (1983–1998) and Gailene Stock (1999–2013). Their managerial styles will be discussed in the next chapter.

Jaffray (2010) explains how collaboration among dance institutions can create a unity of standardisation in terms of equal representation:

I think one of the major helpful things that has happened recently, [is that] all these major institutions, societies like RAD [Royal Academy of Dance], ISTD [Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing] [...] have to be examined as well as the schools. So this is where people like me come in [and] go, "Uh, err...". Examined by professional people in the world of dance. I can't tell you, but there is an organisation that credits them and if they fail they can't practice. So it's a big deal for them to get their accreditation. It's like Ofsted, on each team, there will be somebody like me who's an art form specialist, then there's an education specialist, might be somebody from drama school, somebody like that. There are specific things that we look at, like do they have an equal opportunity [policy], do they have health and safety, look at their records, look at how many people do this? All those things as well as their practice. Sometimes their records are rubbish and their practice is brilliant, sometimes vice-versa. Usually [it's] a balance, but that's a major hurdle people have to go through, so if they don't at least say they have equal opportunities, they're not going to get through. [...] The Arts Council don't have anything to do with them. There is a funding body that is pretty rigorous and they do a good job, otherwise I wouldn't work for them. It's been going around for a while. The Arts Council funds ballet companies, major ones, so of course they can put pressure on the Royal Opera House, quite right they did.

Jaffray mentions Maggie Semple³⁶, who was once the Director of Education and Training for the Arts Council of England from 1989 to 1997. Jaffray (2010) remembers that "Maggie Semple was Director of Education [for ACE] at some point and there were other people

³⁶ Her background experience as a dancer, teacher and choreographer led her to speak at a Black Theatre in Higher Education Conference in London, 1994. Drama scholar Ruth Tompsett noted that she spoke about "identify[ing] issues, principles and debates that are central to consideration of the role of education in addressing, and indeed embracing, the cultural diversity of Britain" (Tompsett, 1998:5). It is interesting to note that Semple was employed the year the Arts Council's *Stepping Forward* report by Graham Devlin was published, offering "some suggestions for the development of dance in England during the 1990s" (1989:64). Some of the suggestions in the report to increase the number of black dancers in training and employment in British ballet institutions were implemented by Semple during her employment with the organisation.

there. But they could only put pressure on the Royal Ballet". She provides a scenario of how the RB could increase their number of black dancers:

The Royal Ballet could say, "We are doing everything, if somebody comes along that is talented enough, we'll take them into the Royal Ballet," fine, but if given 20,000 children [...] studying ballet at an advanced level, [...] all auditioned for the Royal Ballet School and twenty get in and those twenty are black [...] It's just not the numbers. It's not that there's not talent, [but] a lot of children don't get the opportunity. So it takes more [than just] saying we are open, they were generally open, it's just that children weren't coming along in those numbers. (Jaffray, 2010)

Jaffray's comments on the opportunities for black dancers to enter the ballet profession implies that the situation is very complex and it is not only about the numbers entering the schools. Whilst programmes like CTD provide opportunities for black children to engage with the art form, there are many layers of cultural capital that restrict young students' progression, as Jaffray and Paluch mentioned above, including factors such as support from parents, living environment and education.

7.9 Black British ballet dancers

The topic of black British role models, or the lack thereof, is often referred to by Jaffray and the teachers who taught on CTD. Jaffray (2010) highlights the situation in British ballet institutions and offers some advice on how to increase numbers so that black dancers are better represented:

There weren't any ballet dancers of that stature to take on a major principal role with the Royal Ballet at that point. There were dancers in the *corps de ballet* roles, yes. There weren't people of that standard. The Royal Ballet, the English National Ballet, the major companies, the standard is so high. Out of the millions and millions of children that start ballet, so few get through to that standard. And what are you saying, "You're not as good as that"? You have to get people in numbers into the major schools. Then they get the training. You can't take one black child into the Royal Ballet School because of every 20 children that are going into the Royal Ballet School, 19 will be filtered out for one reason or another, either they drop out or [are] not good enough and only one will get through to the Royal Ballet. So one black child in the school is not going to do it. Out of each class of 20 you need 5, year after year after year after year. But how do you get them there? They've got to have training at 11 and that's becoming more difficult. When I first set up Chance to Dance, the Royal Ballet School accepted children with very little training. As long as they had the physique and they were keen, you know, fine. But nowadays they're expecting a high standard of performance technique. So unless you've had training for years and years or unless you are an extraordinary one in a million talent, you're not going to be good enough to get through the auditions to get into those schools. [...]

I think the greatest problems [are] not within the ballet companies these days. But it is gradually changing. I'm not sure that the whole world of ballet training is changing, so it's almost as if those schools are made of all sorts of things and out of that are some

talented children who come out of there and go into the Royal Ballet Company. But down there nothing's really changed at all – I mean, there are exceptions. There are good people doing good work, but it needs to be a massive change.

Jaffray also notes that there are problems with local training schools. She does not mention what they are, but one reason could be that these schools are not monitored with reference to equal opportunities for black children or children from diverse backgrounds. For example, in an interview with a parent, Neville Adams (2012) was very concerned about why his talented daughter who attended a local dance school in Croydon, South London, did not move up in her ballet classes and was not chosen for particular parts in the yearly productions. In a similar scenario, a family member's daughter, Ayanna Wilson (2015), attended a local dance school in Wembley, North London and she said that she never moved up in ballet, so she gave it up. Given these examples, perhaps local dance schools across England should be monitored for equal opportunities under similar regulations to the government body Ofsted.

In contrast to Jaffray's ideas on increasing the number of black dancers and on whether perceptions changed in institutions, Paluch (2014) provides his own observations on why there is an underrepresentation of black dancers in ballet:

Yes and no, because there aren't necessarily the black dancers available. It's not possible to give black dancers a job if they're not trained to that level. So the problem starts far earlier. To be a professional dancer you have to be in full-time training from eleven.

Birmingham and Royal are funded by the government. They're legally required to have really active education departments and those education departments actively work in underprivileged boroughs. I don't think they could do any more.

With reference to Paluch's comments, if companies like the BRB and the RB offer outreach training programmes for black children to experience ballet, is this enough opportunity for them to be exposed to the ballet profession? Should there be more outreach programmes to target this community? The following chapter, Black British dancers' and ballet training, investigates how black dancers succeed in the training arena to establish whether training institutions are doing enough to encourage and support them.

7.10 Summary of Chance to Dance

The CTD programme was established in 1991 and is still actively running in Thurrock and the London boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark (ROH, online 2016). Since Dynott's training through the CTD scheme resulted in employment with ENB, the only other dancer to join a British ballet company is dancer Jacob Wye. In 1998, at the age of eight, Wye began training through the programme, then went on to train at the RBS for five years, and in 2009 he continued training at the Central School of Ballet. After working with several choreographers he joined Ballet Black in 2012 as an Apprentice and became a Senior Artist at the end of 2015 (Ballet Black, online 2016). The programme has been successful in promoting ballet to children from diverse backgrounds who are able to continue training with various performing arts institutions, depending on the availability of funds for their studies. Nevertheless, the number of students that are able to continue training at a professional level in ballet is still very low and therefore contributes to the lack of black dancers represented in ballet. How does the CTD programme compare to other outreach ballet schemes? Are other schemes more successful in getting increased numbers of black and ethnically diverse dancers into ballet training? The Birmingham Royal Ballet's Dance Track programme will be used as a comparison and evaluated at the end of this chapter.

7.11 Dance Track Programme

The Birmingham Royal Ballet's (BRB) Dance Track (DT) is a community outreach programme located in the north of England. The DT programme started in 1997 as part of the BRB Learning Department's initiative. The aim of the scheme was to

enable primary school pupils to access ballet, opening Birmingham Royal Ballet's doors to those who would not ordinarily be introduced to the art-form. The initiative reaches out to young people from across the City of Birmingham, a city known for its ethnic and cultural diversity. Students come to *Dance Track* from a wide range of white, black and minority ethnic groups, irrelevant of their social and economic background. *Dance Track* student ethnicities for the current 2012–13 cohort are 41% Caucasian and 59% from Black and Minority Ethnic groups. (Dance UK, 2012)

The programme is very similar to the Royal Ballet's CTD scheme which, as mentioned above, also provides ballet classes to children from culturally diverse communities in London. The areas in which the DT programme was established were

based in Moseley, King's Health areas of Birmingham and encompasses a web of inter-connecting dance development initiatives. The areas were chosen partly for

demographic reasons – a microcosm of Birmingham’s rich mix of cultural and social heritage, many groups having had a lack of opportunity to interact with the existing arts provision in the city but also for proximity to the resources at BRB and, not least, for the interest expressed in developing the arts in the area. (Hackett, 1999)

In 1999 Hackett was the head of Education for BRB, and was also previously involved with the earlier development and establishment of CTD with Jaffray in 1991, as mentioned earlier.

Hackett explains the early influences from both programmes at the time:

Although *Dance Track* seems to have developed in a relatively short time – just under three years – it has been in embryonic form since I was education officer for Sadler’s Wells Royal Ballet in the mid-1980s and owes a lot to my past experience and colleagues. Many of the ideas were first developed for the Chance to Dance project which I researched and set up for the Royal Ballet but it is here in Birmingham where they are coming to fruition. With the support of the directors of BRB and the vision of local authorities and funders, we are developing a scheme which will enable many young people to develop their interest and potential for dance in a supportive environment in partnership with a range of professionals and maybe a lifelong interest in dance and theatre. (Hackett, 1999)

Hackett was not available for interview, but she does not mention Jaffray’s collaboration with the CTD project, although she acknowledges past colleagues’ contributions to her experience with the DT programme. She refers to establishing the CTD project herself, which is confusing since Jaffray remained at the Royal Opera House and continued to nurture the project for over twenty years. Excerpts from Hackett’s article will be used in the next section to highlight important areas of the programme through Lisa Thomas’s working experience with the company.

7.12 Lisa Thomas: Working with Dance Track (2008–2011)

Lisa Thomas was employed by the BRB outreach programme Dance Track from 2008 to 2011 as an administrator. During our interview, she shared her early experience of taking ballet classes:

I did ballet [from] the age of five to eleven, so I’ve always had an interest in dance. I always used to think if I’d carried on I would have got somewhere. My ballet reports [were] always the same – that I continued to show that ability but, I guess there was no kind [of] push to do it, so I just saw it as a bit of fun. I did that in Birmingham. I had the option to do it at school, I got sent to a private school, it was part of that. You could do ballet at lunch time, once a week, it was an all-girls school, I think it’s changed names now. I changed schools to go to a different secondary school, they didn’t do it there, so I didn’t continue. (Thomas, 2011)

Thomas enjoyed taking ballet classes but said she did not receive much encouragement from her teachers as a child. In spite of her early experience it did not discourage her appreciation for the art form, which may have inspired her to apply for the administration position with Dance Track. She describes part of her role and she gives a brief overview of the social deprivation and the cultural diversity of the children in the areas where she worked on the DT programme:

I worked at their education department so it was about supporting or doing outreach work in schools and within the community and things like that. My main remit of work was the Dance Track Programme. The programme had been running quite a few years when I joined. It was running in the south of Birmingham, I guess it's like Chance to Dance in London, the whole idea is about getting children from underprivileged backgrounds into ballet and giving them the opportunity that they wouldn't normally have. When I first started it was operating in the south of Birmingham, which was predominantly white. Parts of it [were] quite an Asian area, but mostly white. It had been running quite well in that area. I think it had been going for about ten years.

I started working there about three years ago [2008]. So it worked really well in the south of Birmingham and a lot of the schools. There were selective schools that we were working with, there were about twenty schools in the south of Birmingham. In many of the schools, it was a bit of a fast [con] really, they weren't underprivileged areas as such and so a lot of these kids were going to ballet classes anyway, so it kind of defeated the object a bit. And the other kids that could have benefited, the Asian kids, culturally, they weren't allowed to go, so in a way it defeated the whole object of the programme.

The year I started there, they expanded it to the north of Birmingham. The north of Birmingham, the schools we were working with were predominately black and Asian schools. So that's where it kind of began for me, because I began to see things grow and develop. When I first started they had ten schools on board at that point and the plan was for it to grow and get bigger in the north of Birmingham. In the south it was working because it had been going on for so long. All the parents were on board because parents were expecting it every year and were hoping that their siblings would get in [to the Royal Ballet School] and often they did. Some of the Asian children did take part. (Thomas, 2011)

Thomas explains some of the other aspects of her role and provides an insight into the parents' and children's response to the project in the north and the south:

I organised all the workshops, I got more schools on board as well and I used to help out in the classes as well. I used to chaperone kids and support in the class as well. I used to do that for both north and south. The north had about fifteen schools and the south had twenty. There were huge differences between the north and the south, in terms of who attended – the commitment to it [was] completely different. Parents in the north weren't as supportive as in the south.

In Dance Track, we were offering free ballet lessons for a year, and at the end of the year if they showed promise we'd take them on for a second year. We'd buy all their uniforms for them. Ballet shoes, if they grew out of them we'd replace [them]. We'd give them free tickets to see one of the ballets, things like that. So we were literally exposing them to it. Some parents took it up, some didn't. Some showed up one week and then they didn't show up the next week, and it's free. In the north it was predominately black and a few white. Either black African or black Caribbean.

It was amazing seeing the children because they were all so different in the north [and] the south. It's the same city, same age and they [were] completely different purely because of their background and the way that they've been raised up. I would say there was more personality in the north in those kids. The kids in the south were [...] weaker, if they fell down they would want to sit out the whole lesson. In the north, they'd be falling down all the time and just get back up again, they were more robust.

What made a big difference was the time classes were [held]. In the south, the classes were like a weekday evening after school, whilst in the north it was on Saturday morning. I guess that could have [been] an element – [some] parents weren't committed because they didn't want to get up early on Saturday morning. We were careful about when we put the classes on. We knew that in the north if we put the classes on after school, a lot of the Asian kids wouldn't be able to go because of Mosques or something. So it was quite strategic by putting it on a Saturday morning.
(Thomas, 2011)

From the comments, it appears that cultural diversity, class and location in Birmingham had a huge impact on whether the children attended ballet sessions or not. In the south, where attendance was representative of the mainly white population with small Asian groups, children were already attending classes outside of the scheme, but took up the opportunity of free classes after school, whilst in the north where more African, Caribbean and Asian children lived, the number of children attending classes on Saturday mornings was lower. Thomas (2011) believes the reason for the low attendance is cultural, as she explains: "I think part of it is a cultural thing as not having an understanding of what ballet is. I think that is the main thing really. I think there is an element of them thinking that [this] isn't for us, still. [Mainly from the parents]". The perceptions of African and Caribbean parents are also discussed in the following chapters in interviews with dancers who mentioned their parents' responses to their involvement in ballet.

Thomas (2011) describes how Dance Track children sometimes interacted with BRB company members:

We didn't have the classes at Birmingham Royal Ballet, we'd have them at one of the local schools. It was kind of difficult to get to and there wasn't that kind of stigma, coming to this Royal Ballet Company. We'd bring them in as well, in the summer holidays we'd bring in intensive workshops with one of the current ballet dancers. They'd get to learn some rep [repertoire]. All the dancers at the Birmingham Royal Ballet are given the opportunity to teach.

Principal dancer Tyrone Singleton is one of two black British dancers in the Birmingham Royal Ballet company. The other is Brandon Lawrence, who joined in 2011 and was promoted to First Artist in 2014 (Birmingham Royal Ballet, 2016 online). Singleton trained at

the Royal Ballet School Junior Associates at the same time as Shevelle Dynott. He joined BRB in 2003 and was promoted to Principal in 2013 (Birmingham Royal Ballet, 2016, online). Thomas (2011) explains his interaction with the children involved teaching during the school half term.

When finding the children to participate in the programme, Thomas (2011) describes an informal audition process:

We'd just go into schools and say we'd be doing a ballet workshop in a school and that was it, they didn't know that they were auditioning for anything. And if they got through we'd send a letter to the selected children. I was really, really, sad because the fat ones weren't going to get in. Because we'd try to audition the whole year group.

It is evident that during the audition process the aesthetic body selection was part of the assessment process. Once the children were selected to participate in the programme, the next stage was to narrow down the numbers of children to attend the two-year course.

Thomas (2011) explains this phase:

When they first started they used to take older kids and they decided that they would start at a younger age. I think we'd take them at seven, for two years. And then we'd encourage them to audition for PVPs (pre-vocational programmes) at Elmhurst School for dance. The programme would start at the academic year, September to July.

In the north, because the take-up was so small and so low, we just let them all go through to the second year. Because in the south we'd have two classes of like twenty to twenty-five kids, and we'd whittle them down to one class. In the north we could have two classes, because there was never enough. In the south there would be about eighteen going into the second year. And the classes are taught by ex-ballet dancers as well, so they're getting really good training. We'd put through about fourteen in the north and fourteen in the south. In the north you'll probably end up having about ten at the most. Ten to fifteen, what can you do? There is only so much you can do, you're offering free classes, the only kind of commitment we're asking from the parents is to get them there and they just don't do it.

The next stage for the talented DT students was to find further training at PVP dance institutions like the Elmhurst or the Royal Ballet Schools.

7.13 Aesthetics, auditions, photographs

Does the Dance Track programme set black dancers up for failure? Hackett (1999) highlights some of the aspects of aesthetic representation required in ballet and found that

[...] a tendency of teachers and selection panels to seek students who match a pre-conceived and very prescriptive “ballet aesthetic” has meant that many talented young dancers have been unable to further their ballet training. To say that “the talent is not out there” is not correct, as anyone who works extensively with young people will testify; the problem is that we are not tapping into the available potential and then, when we do find it, we do not always use appropriate and creative teaching methods. *Dance Track* will enlarge the pool of youngsters starting ballet classes and hopefully ensure that a more representative group of students enters further training.

Hackett’s description implies that DT will provide the correct training for students who could potentially become a pool of professional dancers. Nevertheless, Thomas’s experience of the audition procedure and how the project searches for aesthetic representation when choosing dancers for the programme implies similar ‘pre-conceived’ ideas to those that Hackett mentions:

When we were auditioning for our Dance Track programme I’d go out and sometimes I’d be looking for kids as well. I’d have a list of criteria that I’d be looking for. And sometimes it wasn’t the ones with talent that they wanted, it was the ones with shape they’d pick, because they could teach them [...]. So if I went along with one of the dance teachers, she’d say, “Oh, she’s got to have beautiful feet”. You know, got no coordination, but they can work with that.

Shape-wise [it] didn’t matter how good they were, they weren’t going to get through. There wasn’t even any point in looking at them. You know some of it may just be puppy fat because they were only seven. A lot of black people have flat feet and they’ve been ruled out because they’re looking for perfect arches. I think it’s Royal Ballet when you audition for the pre-vocation programme, I’m sure on one of them [audition forms] it’s got, “What’s the height of your mother and your father?” (Thomas, 2011)

It is evident from what Thomas describes, just as Paluch mentioned earlier, that dancers who had the required ballet aesthetic body were chosen, rather than the more talented dancers who did not have the ideal body shape. Thomas also mentions the stereotypical perceptions of black people and flat feet (described earlier in Chapter Four) (Oyortey, 1995:193). Thomas explains her feelings about taking photographs of prospective students who want to audition for further training (PVPs) with either the Royal Ballet or Elmhurst Ballet schools:

I do worry, after a while I started to feel guilty, because I was thinking, am I encouraging [them] to take up a profession that there’s only so far that they can get in it? When we’re auditioning for PVPs we have to take photographs of the kids and send them off to Royal Ballet School so they have to be in leotards in four or five positions. Shape-wise, half of them won’t make it based on their shape. So am I setting them up for [disaster], because they wouldn’t even get to the PVPs pre-vocational programme, because they don’t have that perfect arch in their foot or whatever, you know or they don’t have the body and I hear it, I hear it. One of the teachers, ex-dancer, she’s a really pretty dancer, a great dancer, she just doesn’t have the feet or the shape, but she can dance. They judge them on the photograph before the audition. If you don’t look right on the photograph, you’re not going through to the audition. So I had to take the pictures, and I remember a teacher saying to me, “If you take it from high up it will make

her legs look longer". Just little tricks really to make their body appear to be what they're looking for. And as long as there's that mentality, a lot of those black dancers aren't going to get into those schools. (Thomas, 2011)

It is unfortunate that Thomas was upset by taking the photographs of children who were previously selected by the DT programme for their talents and then turned down because of their physical appearance. Surely the Royal Ballet could make amendments to this requirement and allow those dancers to audition, like Elmhurst? Maybe Dance Track should make an earlier selection of body types before they are selected for the programme to avoid disappointment? Perhaps these talented dancers should be referred to other performing arts school, as Jaffray organised for CTD participants. However, Thomas explains that there are exceptions to the rule when the aesthetic of a dancer is overruled by talent. For example, she describes one occasion:

We had this amazing [dancer] – she was absolutely a natural, I can't even remember if she got through to the auditions. She was mixed-race, I remember the teacher saying that she's a really beautiful dancer, she actually looked quite mature for her age as well, they were saying based on that, she probably won't get in. She didn't get in. She ended up getting in in the end, because the head of Elmhurst – because what we do is have an end of year performance and he'd [Desmond Kelly] come to that and seen her perform. He said, yes, she has to come and join our PVP classes, and that's how she got in.

There's two PVPs, Elmhurst and the Royal Ballet School have one as well and they can audition for those as well. They were harder to get into than Elmhurst. I don't think we took the photos for Elmhurst, it was the Royal Ballet School. It was easier to get the children into auditions for Elmhurst because we had links with them. So I think we managed to get all of them into the auditions for Elmhurst if they wanted to. We even got the fee waived and stuff like that. (Thomas, 2011)

Thomas concludes by explaining her feelings towards the programme and why she decided to leave the job:

The whole idea of it is that they want local dancers dancing in the company, so that's the long-term goal of Dance Track. When the kids audition, it's other ballet schools as well, so they're up against other people. In the Royal Ballet there's hundreds that come to audition from all over the world.

I left to move on for more of a challenge. I was also doing a lot of work for very little pay and I started to question myself, is this right? I just thought, am I setting these children up to fail? Shape-wise they may fit what they're looking for, as black people we are grown differently and shaped differently, and am I setting them up to fail? And the amount of eating disorders in the ballet world [...]

It's positive that they're actually doing something and part of it does come down to the parents as well and how much they encourage their children as well to take part in it, the lessons are free. An hour on a Saturday when you've got them out of your head, you know, for free. (Thomas, 2011)

Hackett notes some of the pros and cons of the DT project:

Although good dance training undoubtedly has benefits encouraging physical and mental agility, raised self-esteem, creativity and artistic expression, it would be unfair to encourage young people if there is not a real chance of them continuing their training, preferably remaining as a group in their family environments and local community. It does not seem beneficial in the long-term to remove a chosen few to a hothouse environment; better to develop, if possible, local opportunities where dance is an accepted component of an arts infrastructure and the potential of the young people can enrich the quality of work. (Hackett, 1999)

Hackett's comment implies that if dancers are trained but do not have the opportunity to train further, then this is unfair. Although DT has provided ballet training to students from deprived backgrounds, Thomas has found that these students still encounter difficulties in furthering their career because of the aesthetic criteria set by ballet institutions, therefore the physical aesthetic representation over-rules talent based on Thomas's experience.

7.14 Summary of Dance Track

Although Dance Track aims to give children from deprived backgrounds in Birmingham the opportunity to experience and to participate in free ballet classes, with the hope of progressing to the next level of training, Thomas has highlighted many shortcomings of the project that brought personal distress. The positive aspects of the programme are that it provides opportunities for children in the south and north of Birmingham to learn ballet from professionals, free of charge. The differences in class and culture illustrated that in the south of the city it was mainly white children who were already attending ballet classes, and free classes from BRB were a bonus. Children in the north were mainly African, Afro-Caribbean and Asian and were not as enthusiastic about attending the free classes. This may be due to a lack of understanding of the art form on the part of the parents, and/or an unwillingness to participate in a European/white art form that has no cultural relevance, as was suggested by Thomas. It could also be argued that Eurocentric perceptions of the black body, hence institutionalised racist perceptions, as mentioned in Chapter Two, may still have an impact on teachers' selection of prospective students for auditions based on these ideologies, which was also mentioned by Thomas. If dancers were chosen for PVPs based on talent, such as Desmond Kelly's observation at the Dance Track show, and if they were given the opportunity to train whilst their young bodies can still be moulded for ballet, rather than being assessed by a photo via the Royal Ballet School, then would the DT programme have

achieved its aims and succeeded in creating opportunities for children from deprived areas of Birmingham?

7.15 Conclusion

The CTD and DT are both products of the RB, although the CTD is organised as an outreach programme by the ROH. These programmes were similarly established by Jaffray and Hackett who both researched and worked on the CTD scheme, and this experience led Hackett to establish DT six years later. Although the aim of these programmes was to encourage children from diverse backgrounds to experience ballet, it could be argued that the main focus of the scheme was to encourage black children to enjoy participating in ballet, therefore fostering their future representation on the British stage, following the suggested guidelines set out in Devlin's report (1989:64). As mentioned above, employees on both schemes witnessed social deprivation and lack of cultural appreciation for ballet, and this was particularly obvious among children in the black community. This was another reason that black children have not progressed in ballet. These schemes have provided knowledge and enjoyment for children from diverse backgrounds, allowing them to participate in an art form that has mostly been associated with middle-class white children. Through this experience many children have been able to continue a career in the performing arts, depending on funding, therefore the scheme has in one sense been successful. The next chapter will focus on black dancers and their training experience in ballet institutions.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BLACK BRITISH DANCERS' TRAINING EXPERIENCE IN BALLET

In my mid-teens I had been studying Russian classical ballet for a good eight or nine years. That for me was dance. I was pretty dismissive of anything else at that age. I wanted to train at The Royal Ballet School. I think my only real question was would I be good enough? I'm really not quite sure how far I had absorbed the unwritten signals that there was possibly a no-entry sign for me to that school because of my colour, but I think I had already accepted that I could never go on to join the company, because I had never seen a non-white Royal Ballet dancer on the pages of the Dance Magazine and Ballet Annuals [...]

(Tharp, 2013:19)

8.0 Introduction

Research has shown that historically, black dancers in Britain have trained with renowned ballet practitioners from at least the 1940s onwards. For example, Jamaicans Berto Pasuka and Richard Riley trained with well-known classical ballet teachers before founding Britain's first black dance company in 1946. Pasuka studied with Russian teacher Anna Northcote (Severskaya) while Riley took classes at the Astafievia School where famous dancers such as Antony Dolin, Fredrick Ashton and Margot Fonteyn trained (Thorpe, 1989:172; Watson, 1999). One of the first persons of colour to train and work with a mainstream ballet company was Malaysian–South African Johaar Mosaval, who was born in 1928. He trained at the Royal Ballet School (RBS) in 1951 and a year later he joined the company formerly known as the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, where he was promoted to soloist in 1956. He performed with artists such as Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev, amongst others. Mosaval can therefore be seen to have broken the colour barriers in the ultimate ballet institution, the Royal Ballet. The aim of this chapter, however, is to evaluate how professional black British dancers progressed through the ranks of institutions that offered both training and employment from the 1970s onwards. The chapter draws on my dance research from 2002, and focuses on interviews conducted for this study between 2010 and 2015.

Some of the dancers interviewed began by studying at local London dance schools such as the Joyce Butler School of Dance in Ealing, West London and progressed to mainstream vocational ballet schools like the Royal Ballet School or the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance. Other dancers trained at vocational performing arts institutions similar to Arts Education or London Studio Centre. The evidence presented in this chapter details

dancers' experiences of training from the 1970s to 2015. The information was analysed to reveal whether black dancers encountered racial discrimination during their training experience. Dancers were also asked about teachers who may or may not have inspired them to continue their careers in ballet.

8.1 Black dancers training at the Royal Ballet School

The dancers interviewed who trained as Royal Ballet School³⁷ Junior and Senior Associates during the period investigated include Brenda Garrett-Glassman (1955–), Evan Williams (1971–), Darren Panton (1976–), Shevelle Dynott (1986–) and Chantelle Gotobed (1986–). Other black dancers mentioned but not yet interviewed in person include Jade Hale-Chistofi and Tyrone Singleton. Further investigation is required to establish other black British dancers' attendance at the RBS.

8.2 Brenda Garrett-Glassman (1955–)

Garrett-Glassman was a ballet dancer with Dance Theatre Harlem (DTH) from 1973 to 1977. She is also a notable performer in musicals and was the previous co-owner and teacher of the Joyce Butler School of Dance until 2013 (Joyce Butler School of Dance, 2016 online). Supported by her Guyanese parents, she began dance classes from the age of eight at her local school, the Joyce Butler School of Dance, West London, during the 1960s. There is very little information written about the founder Joyce Butler (1917–2005). The school

³⁷ A prospective Royal Ballet School student who wishes to apply for full-time training completes an application form along with the required photographs of themselves in various standing positions; for example, standing with feet parallel, standing in first position of the feet (heels of the feet together and heels turning out), or standing in with one leg on the ground in "*tendu à la seconde à terre en face* with arms in 2nd" position (RBS Photograph Requirements, 2015 online). Only girls from the age of 13–18 auditioning for the Mid/Senior levels are required to take a photograph in pointe shoes, and they should pose showing "4th position *croisé* with arms in 5th" (RBS Photograph requirements, 2015 online). A twenty-minute video is also required for international students before being selected for an audition for the school. Non-UK residents from Ireland or Scotland can also present a preliminary audition video as an application. All applicants are required to pay a £35 administration fee.

Successful applicants are invited to audition at several venues in Britain. Depending on their age, they audition for either the Junior Associates (JA) if aged 11 to 16 years, or the Senior Associates if aged 16 to 19 years. JAs train and study academic topics full-time, and board at White Lodge in Richmond Park, London for a yearly fee of £32,151, whilst the Senior Associates train at the Upper School in Covent Garden for an annual payment of £28,080. Both fees are above the national annual British average wage of £27,200 (Office for National Statistics, Statistical Bulletin, 2015 online). Financial assistance is available in the form of scholarships and bursaries from the school (Royal Ballet School, 2015 online).

website mentions that she started teaching in her living room in 1936 and became a well-known teacher in West London, and she also achieved recognition as an international Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) examiner (Joyce Butler School of Dance, 2015 online). When Garrett-Glassman chose to become a ballet dancer, she explains the influence that Butler had on her decision:

My academic teacher wanted me to become an athlete because I was fast. My ballet teacher didn't know what to do with me because people of that era thought, "She's black, she should be doing cabaret/nightclub". My teacher had a lot of people approach her to get me into that genre. She was great, she said "No, she can do classical but not in this country". That's why she was thinking about Cuba because she knew about the Cuban National Ballet. That's the lady that left me her school.

(Garrett-Glassman, 2010)

It is important to note that before Butler died she left her school to former students Garrett-Glassman and Vanessa Hoskins-McTaggart to manage in 2005. The bond between teacher and student in this instance shows a deep level of trust and respect for each other. Though Garrett-Glassman was a very talented dancer, Butler realised that she would have to find work abroad because of the colour of her skin. She mentions 'people' (which may refer to other dance professionals of the time) racially categorising her to perform more social 'cabaret' dance forms. The Eurocentric basis of these perceptions were discussed in Chapter Four, which notes that "the assumption had always been that blacks could only excel in Afro-ethnic, Caribbean, jazz, tap, and modern dance" (Gruen, 1990:42–43).

Garrett-Glassman recalls being talent-spotted for the RBS at her summer dance school show by the director of the RAD. Although she did not remember the director's name at the time of the interview, documentation refers to Ivor Guest (1920–), a British lawyer and dance historian who stepped into the role of chairman in the years preceding her performance because the school was facing financial insecurity and bankruptcy. Therefore, it may well have been Guest who saw her perform (Parker, 1995:34). In the interview she recalls this moment:

Miss Butler had a guest of honour at the summer show, which was the Director of the Royal Academy of Dance. He said to Miss Butler, "What are you doing with this girl?" I was the first black student and Miss Butler didn't know what to do with me. Miss Butler was thinking of contacting the Cuban National Ballet, but at 16 years old I didn't want to go to Cuba as it was too far from my parents. But if Cuba was where I had to go to dance, then so be it. The Director of RAD said, "I want her to audition for the Royal Ballet School". He put my name forward.

(Garrett-Glassman, 2010)

It could be argued that Guest's open-mindedness to black dancers in ballet may have been influenced by his American wife Ann Hutchinson Guest (1918–). She was born in New York and travelled to England to train as a dancer at the Jooss-Leeder School at Dartington Hall from 1936 to 1939 (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:225). After her training, she returned to New York where she trained with Martha Graham and Jose Limón, amongst others. She worked as a modern dancer and performed in Broadway musicals. Assisting Rudolf Laban, she specialised in Labanotation and moved back to London in 1947. In 1962, she married Guest and has become the leading authority for documenting published works on many ballets through notation (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:225).

On Guest's recommendation, Garrett-Glassman auditioned for the RBS in 1971. She recalls her experience:

I went and auditioned by joining a class after the term had already started. They took me in and they said, "We will train you; however, you will not go into the ballet company because you're black"! I appreciated the honesty because I didn't have any expectations. At 16 I went to the Royal Ballet School and they also paid for me to go to The Place to take contemporary lessons because that's where they thought my future was going to be. They didn't know anything about the Dance Theatre of Harlem, but they thought, "She's going to dance, so she'll have to do contemporary dance, not classical dance". This was in 1971–2. I basically took what they were offering me. I learnt my parents didn't have to pay a penny. I trained with some really excellent people at The Place, but this just homed in that I didn't actually want to do contemporary because I didn't like it. It was a style that was imposed which I resented but thought, let's just go for it anyway. (Garrett-Glassman, 2010)

RBS may not have conceived of black dancers performing ballet; nevertheless, they only saw Garrett-Glassman as a contemporary artist. At the age of 16 she became the first black British dancer to train with the RB Upper School in 1971 and she received a full scholarship from the Greater London County Council. Even though the RBS warned her that there were no jobs available for black dancers – directly highlighting the school's institutionalised racist perceptions – the school's well-intentioned offer of additional contemporary dance classes reflects the African American experience in the 1930s, where ballet institutions and practitioners directed them towards performing alternate socio-cultural dance genres or dances from the African diaspora (Perpener, 2005:21). Therefore, the implication was that black dancers should only perform what was seen as belonging to their own socio-cultural dance forms (Haskell, 1930:455; Martin, [1963] 1970:178–179; Stodelle, [1968] 1988:319). In spite of segregation during the 1950s, the USA were twenty years ahead of Britain when

the New York City Ballet employed Arthur Mitchell full-time, their first African American, in 1956 (Maynard, 1970:52). However, with the exception of Mosaval, a person of colour employed with the RBC in 1951, the RBC did not employ Evan Williams, a black British dancer in the company, until 1991 (Barrowclough, 1991).

Garrett-Glassman, describes her training with the teachers as a positive learning experience:

I did get some extraordinary training from professionals, the artistic, aesthetic, technique, just their wealth of experience. They were always very sympatico [...] it was all very positive. They were lovely. In my first year I had a lovely lady called Julia Farron and in my second year an equally lovely lady called Pamela May. [...] I had fantastic teachers. I was very lucky and treated so well. There was no differentiation. If I was rubbish then they would say, "That wasn't very good". They didn't treat me any different. (Garrett-Glassman, 2010)

Her teachers were notable former RB dancers, both honoured by the nation for their service to dance. Julia Farron (1922–) was one of the first students to receive a scholarship and study at the Sadler's Wells Ballet School in 1931 (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:78). At the age of fourteen, she was the youngest member to join the Vic-Wells Ballet in 1936 and retired in 1961. Upon retiring from the stage, she was offered a teaching role at the RB in 1964. In 1982 she became assistant director at RAD, promoted to director in 1983 and finally retired in 1989. Pamela May (1917–2005) was formerly known as Doris May. She was born in Trinidad, and her family moved to Britain when she was four. She studied with de Valois at the Sadler's Wells Ballet School in 1933 and a year later joined the Vic-Wells Ballet, changing her name to Pamela May. She became an acclaimed principal dancer in choreographic repertoire for Frederick Ashton and de Valois, and she also created dances in some of their ballets (Meisner, 2015 online). May worked until 1952, although she occasionally performed character roles before finally retiring from the stage in 1982. She was invited by de Valois to teach at the RBS from 1954 to 1977 (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:300).

8.2.1 Garrett-Glassman and school shows

Garrett-Glassman's experience of participating in RBS shows was often exasperating because she was not given the opportunity to perform due to the colour of her skin. She explains the irony of how she was able to perform in the school performance of La fille mal gardée (Frederick Ashton 1960) in 1972:

The only time I was grossly upset was when they were doing the performance La fille mal gardée. The cast list went up and my name wasn't on it. I think I was fourth understudy to a peasant. My friends could understand why I wasn't performing a part of a "friend". That was the establishment kicking back, "You can't have a black dancer out there". One by one the peasants were injured and I got on that stage and I was a peasant! There was only one other girl that didn't get on stage because she was a rebel. She was watching from the audience and came up to me afterwards and said, "You know what, with all the lighting, you couldn't tell that you were a different colour to anybody else". I did competitions and the performance at the Opera House. I got something out of everything. They're all nice memories. (Garrett-Glassman, 2010)

Whilst the RBS discouraged Garrett-Glassman from performing on stage because she was black, the idea that one black female dancer would make a visually aesthetic difference on stage is similar to some dance practitioners' idea that one black swan in a *corps de ballet* would be out of place, as was mentioned in Chapter Four (Doughill, 1984:44).

The RBS welcoming the first black British female student Garrett-Glassman to train was an important step, but a minor one in comparison to her African American peers. She has fond memories of her learning experience with her ballet teachers, yet it could be argued that the institution constantly set and reinforced racial boundaries by removing the prospect of any future job opportunities with the company, by failing to cast her in school productions, and by trying to influence her to take up a career in contemporary dance. While some recognition should be given to their willingness to train a black student in their school, this degree of gatekeeping continued to infiltrate the norms of reinforced racial discrimination policies. Garrett-Glassman graduated from the RBS and went to work with Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) in New York in 1972.

8.3 Evan Williams (1971–)

Williams was inspired to dance by his dance school teacher Desiree Collins at Willesden High, London. She took Williams' class to the theatre and to see companies like Ballet Rambert and the RBC. A friend of his mother's suggested he attend class (at Hill Top in Stonebridge Park, London) with dancer/model Clive Johnson, who taught jazz dance. Williams started dancing at the age of 12 and also attended Sunday classes with teacher Calvin Smith at the Factory in Ladbroke Grove. Whilst at school, Collins suggested that he audition for the National Youth Dance Company, which was founded by John Chesworth,

former associate director of Ballet Rambert in 1980. She also suggested that he take classes at the Young Place, where he went on Saturdays, and that on Sundays he attend lessons at Weekend Arts College (WAC) in north London. In 1987, at the age of 16 years, Williams went to the RB Upper School. He recalls the RBS as one of his most memorable auditions:

I think [it was] probably the experiment of trying out for the most prestigious school and I guess I had been kind of told inadvertently that they don't take black dancers. I think they were rumours. Getting in, was [a] very small or very slim [chance]. It was the excitement of trying out for this prestigious school. I was the only black student, except Darren Panton who was at the Lower School and that's it. (Williams, 2010)

Further evidence for Williams' perception of the absence of black students at RBS, was provided in the 1989 Stepping Forward (Devlin Report) commissioned by the Arts Council Dance Department (Devlin, 1989). Graham Devlin's research established that:

In areas of training, both the Royal Ballet School and the newly formed London Festival Ballet School recognise the need to attract black students. However at the moment neither can point to any real success. Clearly, if the classical dance profession is to open up at all to the black communities, it needs both role models within it and an aggressively publicised equal opportunities policy in its recruitment and training practices. (Devlin, 1989:64)

The impact that the Devlin Report and its recommendations on recruiting more black dancers may have had on Williams' and his contemporaries' career prospects will be discussed in the next chapter. Williams recognises the impact that studying at RBS had on his career:

I was probably at the best classical ballet school in the country and [with the] best classical ballet dancers. At that time, I was at Barons Court [London] and at the school where the company rehearsed. You could feed off that kind of professional dancer's energy in one space. You've got world class teachers, world class training and a world class company right next to you, so being able to feed off that whole energy... And also, being in an environment where there were several boys or men around, that was important to me. At the Young Place and the Weekend College there were other male dancers, but not nearly on the scale of boys or men [at the RBS]. Having the company for sure was a big influence on me. [...] The Royal Ballet School is a great school, a fantastic school but it's training dancers for the Royal Ballet. (Williams, 2010)

Williams' comments imply that the only aim of studying at the RBS is to achieve employment with the RBC. This can be perceived as limited training, for example, compared to the Juilliard School: Dance, Drama and Music in New York, where dancers can learn a combination of performing arts at a professional level, which would allow the individual more artistic choice when choosing potential companies for work (Williams, 2010). Williams implies there should have been more versatility within the training system at that time.

Williams talks about the dance styles he learnt at the RBS, stating that “they offered a weekly contemporary class, at that time it was taught by Ross McKim”. McKim (1949–) was born in Saranac Lake, New York to Canadian parents. He started dancing at the age of 13 in Vancouver, Canada before joining the London RBS in 1965. Performing with many ballet companies such as The Royal Danish Ballet, The National Ballet of Canada and the London Contemporary Theatre, he also founded the English Dance Theatre and Chamber Dance Theatre in Canada (Rambert School of Ballet & Contemporary Dance, 2015 online). He has taught and choreographed for many companies, schools and youth organisations such as Rambert Dance Company, London Contemporary Dance Theatre and The National Ballet of Canada. Appointed director of the Rambert School of Ballet & Contemporary Dance in 1985, he retired in July 2015.

Williams discusses his passion and intention to be not only a ballet dancer, but a well-trained dancer:

You know there's this whole thing of being a ballet dancer and personally I wasn't on the track of being a ballet dancer, that's not where I was heading. I was heading to be a world trained dancer. I was very clear... It wasn't about being a ballet dancer. I felt at that time, it was very “ballet dancers”. Now in the dance world [it's] so close, can you say Bill [William] Forsythe is classical ballet or is it modern? It's kind of the bridge between everything. In the concert dance world and the modern dance world now those dancers have fantastic classical ballet, but what do they do in classical ballet? I don't know. I beg to question. If you want to go into a repertory company, which I wanted to go into, with one choreographer lead like Paul Taylor's work, you relax into the choreographer's way of working. [...] You have to be versatile and that's what I wanted to do. (Williams, 2010)

Williams talks about the response from his parents, who were both Jamaican, regarding him becoming a dancer. As mentioned in Chapter Six, he recollects:

I don't think they were supportive or unsupportive, but I think it was a case [of] them not really understanding what that meant. To them, my parents didn't know anything about concert dance, so for them it was about the idea of being able to make a living. Dance and making a living from dancing was what? Do you know what I mean? [...] I think it was a lack of [...] knowledge and just not knowing what that meant. I think that it was probably the generation at the time and their idea of work and probably still is that you're a labourer, you know that was their idea of work. The idea of doing anything outside of that, they just didn't understand. (Williams, 2010)

Whilst Williams was studying in the late 1980s, his parents, like many people from the Caribbean, African and Asian communities who came to Britain to make a better life during this period, found the working environment difficult because of racial discrimination (Fryer,

1984:395). Therefore, the idea of making a living from the performing arts would be quite distant from the reality of his parent's lives. At the time, many Caribbean parents worked as nurses or were employed with London Transport (Fryer, 1984:373). Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's work on cultural capital can be used to analyse Williams' description of his parents' understanding of ballet. In this instance, his parents had no cultural understanding or no knowledge of ballet, which was considered a higher-class art form. Bourdieu "argued – we use cultural capital to give us knowledge, 'know-how' about the world, practical competences which underpin our status and position, and help us to differentiate ourselves from those who are less well 'culturally endowed'" (Bourdieu, 1997:376). Williams graduated from the RBS and was offered a job with the Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB). His working experience will be discussed in the next chapter.

8.4 Darren Panton (1976–)

In 1983 at the age of seven, Panton started dancing at the Irene Tempest School of Dance in London, where he studied tap and jazz. He was advised by his tap teacher to take ballet lessons to sort out his feet. He describes his first encounter with ballet:

I didn't know what ballet was. [...] Mum took me down there and I walked in. The music was different, the music was quite morbid. The movements were quite stiff, which blew me a bit. The woman had a nice warming face and smile, she told me to come and watch class. She knew why I was sent along to do ballet. I think they must have seen that I had the ability. So I did the class in some shorts. I was standing at the barre. It was really alien to my body. I enjoyed the tap, so I thought, give [ballet] a chance.
(Panton, 2002)

Panton took ballet exams at the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) in Battersea, London, where he achieved grades one to three. He recollects how, during his RAD grade three exam, a parent advised him to audition for the Royal Ballet Junior Associates (JA). At the age of eight he auditioned for the JAs and remembers the interview process:

I went along. They lay you on a table [...] your legs hang off the table. They measure you and work out your turnout and see how you are going to grow. When you passed that, they made you do this education multiple choice questions and answers. I remember there being all other kids and I was the only black one in 1984. Wearing a unitard was so alien to me. Putting on these white pristine ballet shoes and white socks. You pass that stage and then you have to go again to another audition.
(Panton, 2002)

After the audition, Panton was successful in gaining a place at the Royal Ballet's JA, and he became the first black British boy to break the barriers of a traditionally all-white institution. He describes this moment and how the media documented the event: "I remember there were headlines. I don't know how they knew about me getting in the school. There were photographers at the house. They wanted a picture of me in dance gear in the garden. I didn't know what it was all about" (Panton, 2002).

Panton's achievements were well deserved, but did the publicity he received serve only to demonstrate how inclusive and diverse the RBS were becoming to allow one black British boy into a historically predominately white establishment? This point aside, had other potential black British students tried out for the RBS but were not successful simply because of the high standards required? Further research into RBS records could potentially unravel the numbers of black children who auditioned for the school from the 1980s to the present day.

Panton received a grant to attend JA, and he remembers how he felt in this new environment:

The teachers were ok. Some of the guys would torment me and call me "fuzzy-buzz", mainly about my hair. They would say, "You're really black", but I used to just look at them and laugh. I think the teachers went into a meeting to discuss, "Well, we've got this young black boy coming to train". The teachers were very encouraging. [...] At the Junior Associates, age nine to eleven, I was only doing two classes a week. I went to school in the day. [...] On Thursday evenings after school I use[d] to have a ballet class in Hammersmith. I used to get there about 5pm and my mum use[d] to take me there. On a Saturday, it was about 10am. It was two classes, a ballet class and a character class. (Panton, 2002)

Whilst Panton was training with the JA at the RBS he received many racial comments from students. He went on to audition for the White Lodge boarding school JA. He explains the audition procedure: "We had to audition for White Lodge for the Royal Ballet School. Automatically you were in JA and you were qualified to audition for the Royal Ballet School. Then you got outside kids coming forward. You had to pass another three auditions to get into the school" (Panton, 2002). Once again Panton was successful in passing the auditions to gain a place at the RBS JA boarding school. Journalists saw an opportunity to document

his achievement, for he was the first black British boy to attend the RBS at White Lodge.

Panton explains the atmosphere:

People came around my house to take photographs, to them it was another achievement. I think I was the first black boy to get into the school at the age of 11. Yes, I was the first. There was a black guy in the Upper School, but I don't think he went to White Lodge first. I didn't understand what the fuss was about. I remember going down to the school and my mum told the neighbours, "He's got into the Royal Ballet School and it's supposed to be the top ballet school...". My mum was saying, "You know you have to go boarding school". I said "Boarding school, what's this boarding school?" Mum said, "You're going to have to stay there and sleep there". It didn't hit me at the time. I remember that, all the build-up. They sent me this list in the post, name tag this and that. Endless of things. Mum had to pay for all this stuff. New dressing gown and toothbrush.
(Panton, 2002)

The next few years at White Lodge were very difficult for Panton because he had to adapt not only to a new environment with rules and regulations, but he had to culturally adjust to an all-white establishment. He describes how he felt in the institutions and reveals the levels of racial abuse he encountered from other students:

I didn't like it there. It was very different. I remember being taken around the school. It was very cold, [regimented]. It's an old building in the park which hadn't been done up. [In the] first year [...] there was me and the rest of the guys from year 8. There were only 12 of us. I wasn't going home every evening, which I found very difficult as well. There's certain things you're use[d] to. When I got into the dormitory and emptied my suitcase, then it hit me. [...] All these rules, and [as] the teachers walked past we had to stand by the wall. Discipline things. Even though I was well disciplined at home, and I thought, "This is going to be hard". My mum brought us up very disciplined.

It was disciplined. Talking after lights out, you get fined. If they see your lace undone, you get a fine. All these little fines and black marks you use[d] to get. And all these white people, I wasn't use[d] to that. Sharing the dormitory with white guys. I wasn't used to that. They used to annoy me. I remember one guy came up to me and said, "What colour is your tongue?" [...] I got a lot from the older guys. I remember one guy, didn't say anything, but it was his actions towards me [...]

I remember one time they locked me in one of those old wooden cupboards and sprayed deodorant through the keyhole so that I couldn't breathe. Then they got me out and put me in one of those big old trunks and locked it. And they took me to the front door with a left note at the front of the building and pushed it down the stairs, in the box and all that! They hated me! There was one boy Simon, who was short and had a thing about being short. He use[d] to call me "black" this and "black" that. One time I waited for him, I had enough by then and I wacked him. The teachers came out, the headmaster came out and dormitory master. I thought I was going to get something for doing this, I think he got something.

I think the school wasn't always prepared for certain people [...] I think a lot of things I did I got away with because I was subjected to that sort of thing. Some of these people in my year have never seen a black person before. Never been next to one. For the first year I got a lot, not anything from the teachers at all, but the kids, they were more ignorant.
(Panton, 2002)

It is unfortunate that Panton experienced acts of bullying and racism from the students.

Since he constantly endured what could be considered daily taunts from his peers in a highly

disciplined environment, it is likely that many such events were not reported. Nevertheless, the school intervened when Panton was antagonised enough to hit Simon, but what about the other unreported incidents? Should Panton have reported all previous incidents as well? What would the school have done? Dance researcher Clyde Smith describes a similar occurrence of bullying that happened to him when he was in high school: “I think junior high school was the turning point for me. As an adolescent in a violent setting. I found that being ‘good’ and following the lead of authority figures did not protect me from those petty authoritarians we call bullies” (Smith, 1998:126–127). Panton’s experience is like Smith’s, with reference to the “petty authoritarians” who in this instance were his bullying peers. Whilst Panton followed the discipline of the school, and put up with the abuse, he too found a turning point and retaliated.

8.4.1 Panton and school shows

Panton explains how the school did not want to include him in certain parts in the end of year shows:

When it came to the end of year shows, I knew I wouldn’t get certain parts because I was black. I just remember certain things I wasn’t put up for or my face was covered. I remember being the drummer for The Nutcracker at the Royal Opera House by Sir Peter Wright. I was part of a main role and there was a second cover for it, the white guy that was doing it was a better dancer. I didn’t get to do the soldiers, the soldiers had bare faces. The rabbit drummer, he had a rabbit thing and head and a gauze, so I looked like a rabbit. I hardly ever got to be a soldier, I was always a drummer. Even though it was a good part, I had to do a lot more work as well, I had to go around drumming. (Panton, 2002)

Was it a coincidence that Panton performed the role of the rabbit drummer in The Nutcracker because he was the best dancer for the part, or did the RBS choose this part for him because his face would be covered, disguising the colour of his skin from the audience? The roles dancers perform when working in ballet companies will be evaluated in the final conclusion.

Panton remembers the BBC going to the school to do a documentary on him. “I remember the BBC came to do a documentary on me asking, ‘They can’t have a black dancer dancing in a *corps de ballet*, it didn’t look right’, things like this. ‘So we’ll have a black swan.’ These were the questions they were asking the directors” (Panton, 2002). It is evident that when

Panton went to the RBS, they were constantly challenged by the presence of a black male dancer in their establishment, which opened up more queries about the representation of black dancers on the stage, as was questioned by the BBC. Panton went on to audition for the Upper School and he was again successful in gaining a place. He had already completed five years at the JA and at the age of sixteen he was entering the Upper School as a young adolescent. His attitude towards the establishment began to change, as he explains:

The Upper School. Remember I'd been boarding for five years. Now I'm out and I'm sixteen and I want to have some fun. From leaving the Lower School to joining the Upper School there wasn't enough of a break – six, seven weeks. So I thought they should have given us a longer break to mentally prepare you for that school. I don't think they prepared you to be financial[ly] [aware]. Now you could be living by yourself, maybe. You have to pay for this and pay for that. So I found myself going out a lot and seeing some of my old friends. I sort of lost my concentration. Then the school realised that I wasn't coming in, in the mornings.

They had a dance history class. I like my history but the teacher was so boring. If I'm coming in at 8 o'clock in the morning, you've got to make the lesson and keep it alive. I thought, I'm not coming in for that. I was 16 and so rebellious. I must have done four of her classes in a term and they called me in the office about the missing classes.

(Panton, 2002)

In contrast to Panton's adolescent experience at the RBS, an example of a dancer who was considered a rebel was renowned Scottish dancer and choreographer Michael Clark (1962–). He trained at the RBS in 1975 and was deemed a star pupil:

To the grief of his teachers, he refused to join the Royal Ballet company and instead went to Ballet Rambert. [...] He dabbled in drugs and was caught glue-sniffing while he was at ballet school, but he knew they would never expel him because he was their star pupil. "And when I first danced at the school on speed, I remember knowing I felt amazing, but also knowing it was the drug – I wasn't suddenly an amazing dancer." But he was always looking for mind-altering experiences.

(Barber, 2009 online)

Clark loved punk music of the 1970s, and this influenced the founding of his own company in 1984, at the age of 22, where he could create choreographic works. Smith refers to a student called Catherine who described her experiences in ballet school as resembling a prison, with rules, dormitory checks and fines just as Panton mentioned above. She comments that when pupils were outside of the classroom, many would party and take drugs. Smith describes these actions:

This image of bacchanal does not fit one's image of imprisonment. However, it is likely that this behaviour is, in part, a form of recuperation that allows one to release stress and tension. The carnival-like nature of such behaviour forms an inversion of the social order. In such an inversion, students have riotous control over their own lives.

(Smith, 1998:140)

The description that Smith provides explains Clark's and Panton's behaviour to a certain extent. Both dancers rebelled against years of systematic order whilst attending the RBS and fought to claim their identity. Whilst Clark was noted to have taken drugs to escape his environment, Panton was trying to establish his cultural identity and individuality in an all-white establishment.

Black British identity became more prominent during the 1980s through music, dance and fashion; this was due in part to the influence of the 1981 riots in England (Fryer, 1984:395).

English scholars Peter Childs and Mike Storry highlight this period:

Afro-American hip hop culture created a unisex fashion consistent with the broader casual sportswear and casual trends among Afro-Caribbean youth in Britain. Trading in a common currency of style, designer tracksuits, expensive trainers and chunky gold accessories became signifiers of power and status in the reclaimed cultural terrain of the street. (Childs and Storry, 1999:14)

Panton was an adolescent of this era: despite his attending a mainly white institution, street music and fashion had an impact on his identity. He explained:

It was the period where I had my hair done with patterns in the back, like Bobby Brown at the time. I had rings on my fingers and my shell-suit. I remember one of the teachers saying, "You look like you came from the school across the road". When things would go missing in the school, I would get called in the office and asked "Do I know anything about it?" One time the lockers were shot with a gun and they called me in. It wasn't me, they found out it was some white guy. It was a coincidence because of my appearance. (Panton, 2002)

Since Panton entered adolescence at the age of sixteen, it seems as though he began to change his attitude and take control of his actions rather than be controlled by the institution. Panton's image offended some of the members of staff as he began to be labelled an outsider, as the teacher implied. He also began to be accused of crimes within the school. It is evident that his new appearance gave the establishment an excuse to stereotype Panton as a young black potential thief. Panton's individuality challenged the school to take drastic action, as he explains:

I remember Evan Williams was at the Upper School at the time, he only went to the Upper School. He was two years older than me. I remember I came in with a Rasta T-shirt, it was a Rasta man with a spliff [cannabis cigarette] on it, my mum got it from Jamaica. I remember the looks on their face. They didn't come to me to tell me about the T-shirt, they went to Evan and they went to a chef who happened to be black, to ask them to ask me and caution me not to wear the T-shirt. They said, "There is apparently a problem around the building about the T-shirt you're wearing and they're really not comfortable with you wearing that T-shirt". Maybe I was wrong, but ahh... (Panton, 2002)

Why didn't the school speak to Panton directly about his T-shirt? Why did they ask the only black men in the school to speak to him? It is evident that they felt threatened by him.

Panton describes the frustration he felt at the time:

I felt that I couldn't express myself. I wanted to express myself. It was wrong for them to take that away from me. They wanted to mould me into this goody, goody Royal Ballet trained puppet. I didn't hang around with my colleagues at school. I couldn't associate myself with the others. The school didn't like that so they asked me to leave.

(Panton, 2002)

Panton could no longer psychologically go through the act of 'double-consciousness' as described in Chapter Three (Du Bois, [1903] 2000:2; Gilroy 1995:29). Whilst at the RBS he was institutionalised and immersed in white European culture for eight years. Even though he tried, as a black British/Caribbean young man, Panton was culturally unfamiliar with the environment and unsettled by the acts of institutional racism he encountered. Nevertheless, at the age of sixteen cultural identity became even more important to him and his new image was not accepted by the school because they perceived him as a negative representation of black street culture (Hall, 1997:272–273), therefore this rejection led him to rebel. Art historian Kobena Mercer's (1994:299) work can be used as an example to explain Panton's individuality: "Identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty". Although Panton left the RBS, he was successful in performing with British ballet companies, like the Royal Ballet, London City Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet. His working experiences will be discussed in the next chapter on black dancers and employment.

8.5 Shevelle Dynott (1986–)

Dynott started dancing at the age of five, participating in movement classes at school. By the age of seven he was chosen from his Brixton school in south London to participate in free ballet classes arranged by the Royal Ballet's outreach scheme Chance to Dance (CTD). As mentioned in Chapter Seven. Dynott describes the early stages of becoming a ballet dancer:

When I was younger I didn't know anything about ballet until this scheme came round to schools in Lambeth and was offering two years' free dance training. I'm originally from Brixton so there's not that many dancers that come out of Brixton. Plus, it was classical ballet as well. [...] The Chance to Dance scheme was a collaboration between the Royal Ballet and the Dance Theatre of Harlem. When they did demonstrations at schools, they brought one male dancer from the Dance Theatre of Harlem and one

female dancer from the Royal Ballet. So they both dance together just to show the two collaborating. [...] I don't think they have that connection any more. I don't think people still remember the Dance Theatre of Harlem and the Royal Ballet was a collaboration for the Chance to Dance. (Dynott, 2010)

It is interesting to note that, in order to represent and encourage diversity for the CTD scheme, the RB had to import black dancers from abroad, as mentioned in Chapter Seven. In the year prior to the establishment of CTD, principal dancers Christina Johnson and Ronald Perry from Dance Theatre Harlem (DTH) were invited to perform with the RB in the Nutcracker at the Royal Opera House in December 1990. This collaboration was reviewed in both the British and the American press. In Britain, The Guardian reported that "integrated casting has long been the demand in British theatre. But the world of ballet – particularly at Covent Garden – has remained stubbornly white" (Pascal, 1990:8). Meanwhile, in America The New York Times headline noted "Blacks Dance with the Royal Ballet" (Cassidy, 1990). This article also focused on the performance, reporting discussions by British journalist/dance critics and dance scholars on integrated casting. Therefore, DTH's profile helped to achieve a perception of integration without actually altering the ethnic composition of the major British companies on stage. As mentioned by Jaffray (2010) in Chapter Seven, this collaboration was also part of the CTD scheme. Dynott explains his experience as a student of CTD:

When the Chance to Dance scheme came around schools, I thought I was doing a PE lesson. I didn't know it was an audition. They had these little masking tape, marking first position on the floor. "Could you put your feet in this position? Can you do a plié? Can you turn around and do another plié?" [It was] a proper audition like they do for young ones. It was a process where they had to split the class in two, if I remember correctly. And then there was the final audition with people in your year and I was in that. It was just our school and I don't know how many schools were in Lambeth. But a few thousand children who they auditioned. So it was a whole audition process [...] my parents had to take me [...] to the auditions. (Dynott, 2010)

As mentioned in Chapter Six, Dynott's Jamaican parents were very supportive of his career choice to become a ballet dancer. He recalls their thoughts:

My mum always said she wanted me to go to a military school just because of the area I was in, she wanted me to have discipline. And I think, God must have answered her prayers because I went off to boarding school and after the Chance to Dance scheme I had my discipline definitely taught there. My dad took me everywhere [...] and drove me. For a father to do that, the support was always there. (Dynott, 2010)

The journey to becoming a dancer is very intensive. Dynott explains the various ages and stages of his dedicated career in ballet:

From 7 to the age of 10 it was about one day a week. After the Chance to Dance scheme I went to Junior Associates [...] to the Royal Ballet School at the age of nine. And that was every Saturday, once a week and that was at Barons Court. It was like a little insight of what White Lodge would be. So after two years there I auditioned for White Lodge, so that's where the training really started when I was doing training every day and my academics and everything. So from the age of 11 to 19, eight years.
(Dynott, 2010)

Dynott describes the amount of time and dedication he invested to train at the level needed to acquire a place at the RBS. Unsurprisingly, the majority of students were white, yet Dynott studied with two other boys at the RBS: Jade Hale-Chistofi, who subsequently joined Ballet Black, and Tyrone Singleton, who was promoted to soloist at the BRB. Dynott describes how the friendships developed between these men:

Tyrone Singleton is like my best mate. We went to White Lodge together. And Jade Hale-Chistofi was the year below me. So there was us three and everyone else was white. Me and Tyrone went to school together. And Tyrone, unfortunately, they asked him to leave in Year 9, I think it was Year 9. You have an appraisal every year. It's quite weird to think at the age of 11 you could actually get kicked out if you don't get pass a certain grade. Year 9 you're 13. He got 'assessed out', they call it, didn't pass the grade, didn't pass 50. The standard was extremely high. I think that has changed now at the Royal Ballet School. [...] What I've heard is, they give you two years before they ask you to leave instead of the one.
(Dynott, 2010)

Although Singleton was asked to leave the RBS at the age of 13, he later joined the BRB and now is a principal dancer. Dynott (2010) mentions learning other dance styles at White Lodge like "Greek, Irish, Scottish, Morris and character dancing" whilst he was training. He also participated in a jazz workshop with Eric Carpenter in Year 11, held in the last year of his training. When he was at the Upper School, he learned contemporary dance in his later years. Dynott's training was funded by scholarships from the age of 11 and he received living expenses of £6,000 to £7,000 per year. Fees were assessed in accordance with parents' earnings, therefore if they did not earn above a certain amount the student would receive a full scholarship. His parents contributed a set amount towards his training fees (Dynott, 2010).

8.6 RBS directors from 1998

The RBS changed directors in 1998. Dame Merle Park, director from 1983–1998, was replaced by Gailene Stock from 1999–2013. Park (1937–), formerly known as Betty Lamb, was born in Rhodesia (now known as Zimbabwe), moved to England in 1951 where she trained at the Elmhurst School, and graduated to work with the RBC. Stock (1946–2014) was

born in Victoria, Australia and won a scholarship to attend the Royal Ballet Upper School, then became a principal artist at the “Australian Ballet, the National Ballet of Canada and the Winnipeg Ballet” (Royal Ballet School, 2015 online). She worked for eight years as the Director of the National Theatre Ballet School, Victoria, Australia, then nine years at The Australian Ballet School before finally taking up the role of Director at the RBS³⁸ in 1999, until 2013 when she gave up her duties after battling cancer. She died in 29 April 2014 (Royal Ballet School, 2015 online).

It is evident that Park and Stock had different management styles and approaches to organising the RBS and these differences were keenly felt by the students, as Dynott recalls:

When I was going through Lower School it was going through change. We had really old-school teachers. For the first three years, it was like an older director and I think it was more like hierarchy, you know like doing a little bow when you saw the director of the school and you hear that sort of stuff when Darcy Bussell and those sort of people were at the school. [...] As we were going through change, Gailene Stock said there was no hierarchy. The discipline was still there, but it wasn't so rigid when someone was walking down the corridor, it was a bit more relaxed. (Dynott, 2010)

Dynott goes on to note a more negative experience with one of his teachers from the previous regime:

In the beginning it was quite difficult because the teachers were very old school and Christine Beckley, she was really old school. Not practically sure if she liked me, to be honest. I remember back in the day you used to have [...] lines. She always used to have her favourites at the front and then it would be [...], people she liked, she said hello to. Then you'd have the back line. I always knew my space, back left. And I always used to stand there being ignored. I wondered if she was going to look at me. They would always rotate the lines and the first line would stay there at the front for four exercises. Then the other line for one exercise then the back line for half an exercise and then “Let's swap back”.

So I got that in the beginning but I never looked into [it] that much because I felt [the] privilege of being in that situation I was in and I was probably young and naive. Now if I ever saw that happening [...] as a teacher, I could never let that happen, people would probably have to stand in a big semi-circle to get to see everyone. As time changed and the new director came in she did tell the other teachers to go. [...] Things changed. First it was Merle Park and then it was Gailene Stock. I have the utmost respect for that lady.

³⁸ According to journalist Martin Childs:

Her 15-year tenure saw her transform an institution seen as somewhat isolationist and archaic into a more internationally welcoming establishment which is now widely recognised as one of the world's leading classical dance training centres. Her arrival in London coincided with a crisis of confidence at the Royal Ballet School, with concerns about slipping standards. [...] Stock wanted to make a difference, and she did. She ruffled feathers with her no-nonsense, innovative approach – revolutionary to some – and found the idea of working to an “English” artistic brief outdated. She gave the curriculum a complete overhaul, placing a greater emphasis on contemporary dance and pas de deux, introducing a third year into the Upper School, expanding the choreographic course, furthering the School's touring opportunities and re-introducing a teachers' course for professional dancers and a teacher exchange programme.

(Childs, 2014)

She liked me, she could see I was a hard worker. She could say some really harsh things to some people, but I never got any of it. (Dynott, 2010)

Was Dynott's experience with Christine Beckley an isolated incident, or was it a part of her character to segregate and ignore students she disliked? Without interviewing other students who were taught by her, the truth of her personality may remain unknown.

Dance scholar Robin Lakes (2005) has researched the topic of dance and the authoritarian, thus her work can be used to partly illustrate Dynott's experience with Beckley. Her research found:

Teachers exhibit frustration and impatience if there is not immediate and continued mastery of the material presented: some ignore certain students, or storm out of the room in an exasperated rage out of disappointment or anger. [...] Both physical actions and verbal attributions that seek to render the student powerless are often delivered in a demeaning fashion. These messages can be transmitted to dance students through direct verbal language, adjunct asides, and tone of voice, or through unspoken forms such as the use of silence, eye movements, and eye contact (or lack thereof). [...] They can be conveyed through the choice of classroom activities. (Lakes, 2005:23)

It could be argued that Beckley was upholding the teaching conventions of ballet, in which hierarchy is maintained, so they have the power to manipulate and control the students.

8.7 Dynott's pre-employment performances

Whilst Dynott was studying in the Upper School he participated every year in school productions, which were held at the Royal Opera House. He reminisces:

In the first year I performed Prologue de fugue, which was a work choreographed in our year and I was in the first part of that. In the second year I got to do Les Patineurs, which was an Ashton ballet. I think there was only about eight boys in it and I got to do it. I was really, really happy to be in it on the Opera House stage. In my last year I got to learn another Ashton piece, La Valse. I got to learn one of the principal guys, but never got to do it unfortunately, but I got to do the *corps de ballet* part anyway. But that was quite nice because not everyone got to dance on the Opera House stage. (Dynott, 2010)

Dynott talks about the Genée Ballet International Ballet Competition, which he entered from 2002 to 2004. The Genée was named after one of the founders of the RAD, Dame Adeline Genée (1878–1970). Originally named Anita Jensen, and born in Denmark, she experienced a successful ballet career touring in Europe, for example with the Berlin and Munich Court Operas. She also worked in the USA, performing in American musicals, as well as touring

Australia and New Zealand (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:186). Genée was a founder and president of the RAD from 1920 to 1954 and in 1931 the first international competition was named after her. To enter and to win the Adeline Genée gold medal is considered the ultimate award a ballet dancer can achieve from the RAD (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:186).

Dynott reflects:

I did the Genée in the beginning season, late 2002 to 2003, a competition done within the RAD. I did it the first time and didn't get anywhere. And then in 2004 I decided this was my last competition. I did a lot of competitions and always got to the semi-finals and never got anywhere. I performed Siegfried from Swan Lake which I practiced before and learnt two solos before I went out there, and I won the bronze medal and that was amazing because it was at the Herod Atticus [theatre] in Athens and holds 5,000 people. And to do three solos on that stage and to come away with a bronze medal and saying that's your last competition. What an achievement.

(Dynott, 2010)

When Dynott was at White Lodge he went to Windsor Castle and performed the Horn Pipe for Prince Philip's 80th birthday in 2001, and met the Queen and her family.

Dynott feels that the most valuable aspect of his training was learning self-discipline and discipline within the art form, which enabled him to work within the system and "made him grounded" (Dynott, 2010). The only regret Dynott has was not having more lessons in other styles of dance such as jazz or tap dancing, which he felt would have given his dance style more flair, rather than the instilled classical technique that has evidently become the main part of his training. He states:

We did do tap at the age of 16, for three hours on a Saturday morning with Bill Drysdale. And if you don't know tap [he isn't going to bother with you], and I'd never done tap before, so I'd be at the back, just like, tap, tap. It was really annoying.

(Dynott, 2010)

Dynott gives an example of why learning other dance styles would have been an asset to his career. The ENB (who he currently works for) were rehearsing a ballet Strictly [George] Gershwin, but he was not able to participate in this, because he could not tap dance as well as his colleagues, who had trained in other performing arts institutions before joining the RBS. There is a stereotyped assumption that black dancers should know how to tap dance, due to its black/African American heritage, as mentioned in Chapter Four, hence the expectation that black dancers should perform black dance styles (Haskell, 1930:455; Martin, [1963] 1970:178–179; Stodelle, [1968] 1988:319). Dynott is not African American and it was just unfortunate that he was not skilled in that dance style. He graduated from the RBS

and went to work with ENB in 2005 as artist of the company. His employment with ENB will be discussed in the next chapter on black dancers and their work experience.

8.8 Chantelle Gotobed (1986–)

Gotobed was spotted by her nursery teacher, who suggested that she take dancing lessons at her local dance school, the Gaynor Cameron School of Dance in Milton Keynes. Since 2005 it has been known as the Juliet Ratnage School of Performing Arts after being taken over by Ratnage when Cameron retired (Juliet Ratnage School of Performing Arts, 2015 online). Gotobed started dancing at the age of four and was later noticed by her local dancing teacher Cameron, who advised her to audition for the RBS JA's. Gotobed recalls this experience:

The school was run by a different person and then Gaynor Cameron came along and that's when she spotted me and said, "You should try for Royal". So it started from there. I thought, ok I'd have a go, not really knowing all that it entailed. But I loved dancing and I thought it can't be bad. So I went to the audition and got into JAs. I think I auditioned when I was eight and started when I was nine. And did that for three years. And I also went to the Royal Ballet summer school which I'd auditioned for and I also got to perform after seeing Beatrix Potter [...] at the Royal Opera House, I performed in Beatrix Potter at about ten, at the Royal Festival Hall because the Royal Opera House was being refurbished. I got to perform on the stage with the Royal Ballet Company.
(Gotobed, 2010)

Gotobed remembers the length of time it took her to train from the age of four, to joining the RBS in 1995 at the age of nine and studying until the age of nineteen.

At White Lodge we learnt everything from Scottish to Irish to Greek dancing. Did a bit of tap, a bit of jazz. Contemporary was [...] focused at the last year of White Lodge. Three years at the Upper School we did contemporary once a week. We had assessments and appraisal in the class as well. It was taken fairly seriously to learn different types of dance, which I think really is important because the styles of dance these days, big companies are not just doing classical, neo-classical and contemporary styles as well. A lot more is required from a dancer these days.
(Gotobed, 2010)

She explains how her training was funded and discusses the cost of dance essentials:

All British students get scholarships of some sort and government funds. My parents as well had to pay part of the fees and pay for my pointe shoes. It may sound like, oh, pointe shoes, but it is kind of a lot. About £40 per pair. I used to go through two or three shoes in a week. I've got better now. They just break from the instep and get really soft, you can't dance on it. So now I go through about one or two a week and that's just shoes alone.
(Gotobed, 2010)

Gotobed (2010) describes her dance training experience with teachers at the RBS and explains:

I don't ever recall in my training ever feeling [...] discouraged in any way. I did enjoy my time. Not saying there weren't any hard points, there is in everything, whatever training you do. I didn't feel discouraged. I never felt like, "Oh, you're the only black girl" even though I probably was, but I didn't ever feel like that.

Sharing her positive learning experience, Gotobed (2010) recollects the roles she performed whilst she was a student at RBS:

I performed in Beatrix Potter. I went on tour with the RB. I was invited and got picked along with two boys. I was one of three girls. I went to Washington and Boston [USA]. I was 18 at the time. Before I went to White Lodge I was picked to do the Nutcracker. I did the Nutcracker in the Upper School as well. I did Manon, I did Sleeping Beauty, I did Firebird, I did a lot, so I danced in quite a bit. Romeo and Juliet. I did Paquita pas de trois and did a solo in Italy when we went to Palermo on tour with the Royal Ballet Company. So, yeah I did get good roles and did quite a bit. With the Royal Ballet Company, I was with the *corps de ballet*. At school I did solos evening, which was quite a good thing to do. I did a solo role when I went to Italy. I didn't do a lot of solo roles at school. I don't think I was really pushed in that respect. I did a bit of everything. I was never always the front person, but never always the back. A bit of both really, in the middle.

It is apparent that Gotobed was a good dancer who performed in a number of roles in productions with the school and the company. But if she was good enough to perform a solo role in Italy, then why was she not 'pushed' to perform solo roles in Britain? Gotobed summarises her experience at the RBS:

I think it was great to go to the Royal, sort of growing up in that environment and getting the good training and also to have that experience to dance with the company. And to see how, in the time that I was a student, how the professionals work and how it was done and working in a professional environment. I think that did a lot. I think a lot of my growth came when I left school and was left on my own to fend for myself. That's when I really learnt, my eyes really opened to what the whole world was really about. I have no really negative experiences at Royal. But you're sort of sheltered in a way. You're dancing, you're studying for the academics, you're hoping to pass your assessments and appraisals and you go on to the next year and everything is done for you. You're very lucky and you take that for granted that there is always someone there to go to and if there's something wrong everything is organised for you. And then when you leave it's a big shock to the system and I don't think nothing can really prepare you for that. Not at all.
(Gotobed, 2010)

Gotobed, like Dynott, recognises the impact that the change of directors at RBS had in 1998.

However, she was somewhat less enthusiastic about the new direction:

I came in the Dame Merle era and then Gailene Stock took over in my second year. So they had a lot of older generation teaching. [...] It was old school training, brilliant, can't fault it at all. They were much more open and much more honest I think. [...] They were much tougher. They were English. And [...] I loved it and I learnt a lot because you realise now this is what I have to do. But then you had the new teachers, you know, it's a different approach, but not saying that was bad at all, it was just different. [...] I was coming into it quite new and just joined White Lodge when Dame Merle was there and then Gailene Stock was there when I was about 12. [...] You sort of adjusted to it as children do, you take it as it is and go along with it.
(Gotobed, 2010)

From Gotobed's statement, it can be inferred that she enjoyed the strict discipline of the old school, but nevertheless she soon adapted to the changes of Stock's new directorship.

The support of a family when choosing to become a ballet dancer is very important, especially when the profession is so tough, hierarchical and predominately white. Gotobed describes the support from her English father and Jamaican mother:

The family were very supportive. Obviously they would prefer the academic safer route, much more secure. Arts anyway are known for being not that secure at all. Especially for a woman, and [for] someone of colour [it] is even harder. They were supportive because I was good at what I do and I had a passion for it. I was doing ok. I was getting schooling, so if I was getting for where I want to be then [...] They were always there, always supportive, always a phone call away. (Gotobed, 2010)

It is evident that Gotobed's family was very supportive of her decision to become a ballet dancer, and she highlights the potential difficulties of entering the profession as a woman of colour. Even though when she was 18, she toured with the RBC to Boston, Washington and Palermo, she was not offered a job once she graduated. Gotobed auditioned for the Northern Ballet Theatre Company, now known as the Northern Ballet (2014), and gained employment from 2007–2008. Her experiences will be discussed in the next chapter on black dancers and employment.

8.9 Summary

All the dancers interviewed above graduated from the RBS and gained employment in British ballet companies, except for Garrett-Glassman who went abroad to work with the DTH. Garrett-Glassman and Williams both trained at the Royal Ballet Upper School during the 1970s and 1980s, when the presence of a black dancer training in ballet was uncommon. Whilst Garrett-Glassman was discouraged from following a career with the RB regardless of having been trained by the RBS, ten years later Williams still had the impression that the RBS did not train black dancers, and became the first black male dancer to be employed with the BRB in the 1990s. Panton became the first black boy to train at the RBS in 1984. Whilst boarding at the school during the late 1980s, he experienced racism from his peers and he felt that the school was discriminating by selecting him for roles where his face was covered for the end of year shows. The RBS did not appreciate his individuality and

therefore he was asked to leave. Cultural policies such as the Devlin Report may have influenced the changing attitudes of institutional racism within the RBS and prised open some doors for Dynott and Gotobed, though, from the interviews at the RBS one gets the impression that the changes have been very slow. This chapter will now go on to explore the experiences of black dancers at other institutions.

8.10 Black ballet dancers and other training institutions

When analysing black dancers' experiences whilst training at the RBS, the main theme that becomes apparent is the institution's attitude towards the dancers. By examining interviews with black ballet dancers who trained in other institutions in London, an evaluation of their experiences will establish whether there are similarities.

8.10.1 Denzil Bailey (1965–)

Bailey started dancing at the age of 17 during the 1980s at the London School of Classical Dance, which changed its name to West Street and later closed down in 2000. Bailey trained for three and a half years and received a grant from Brent Council. He recollects how black dancers in training at Arts Education School³⁹ (ArtsEd) were pushed into other dance genres, for example either contemporary or modern styles, regardless of some of their desires to have a career in ballet. Bailey recollects his friends' experiences at ArtsEd:

Noel Wallace and Ben Love went to ArtsEd at Arts Education School; it was like a big school for musical theatre and very few of the boys came out of the school and did ballet. You got streamed into ballet or musical theatre. All the black people got pushed into musical theatre regardless of what you wanted to do. (Bailey, 2010)

³⁹ ArtsEd was formerly two schools, founded by dancer Grace Cone, who established the Cone-School of Dancing 1919, and Olive Ripman, who created the Ripman School in 1922. They partially focused on merging performing arts with academic education, "preparing young men and women for professional careers in or related to the theatre" (Arts Educational School, 2015 online). The schools merged in 1939 and it was then known as Cone Ripman School, before it was later renamed as ArtsEd. The ArtsEd website notes that "Dame Alicia Markova and Sir Anton Dolin drew almost exclusively on ArtsEd students to help them create their revolutionary company London Festival Ballet – which eventually became the English National Ballet. Dame Beryl Grey became Director of the Schools in the 1960s" (ArtsEd, 2015 online). The school relocated in 1986 to the old Chiswick Polytechnic in London, now known as the Cone Ripman House. Markova (1910–2004) was the school president until her death in 2004, and the composer and theatre producer Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber was then appointed in 2007. Students can attend from the ages of 7 to 18.

The dancers Bailey refers to are well-known black British ballet artists. In 1985, Wallace was the first black male dancer to be employed with the London Festival Ballet ⁴⁰(known as ENB), and Love danced with many British and European companies such as London City

⁴⁰ The Festival Ballet was founded in 1950 by English dancer and choreographer Alicia Markova (born Lillian Alicia Marks, 1910–2004) of Irish and Jewish parents. She started dancing for medical reasons at the age of seven because she had flat feet, which ironically was a trait frequently associated with black people (as mentioned in Chapter Five). She also had weak knees, and she was advised that ballet would strengthen her ligaments (Sutton, 2013:12). Other co-founders of the company were English dancer and choreographer Anton Dolin (born Sydney Francis Patrick Chippendall Healey-Kay, 1904–1983) and Julian Braunschweig (1897–1978), Polish businessman. Inspired by galas and festivals performed by Markova and Dolin throughout Britain, the company emerged and established its name. Markova and Dolin trained with former Ballets Russes dancer Princess Serafina Astafieva in London. Diaghilev recruited Markova to join the company: she changed her name from Lillian Alicia and at the age of fourteen she became known as the first “baby ballerina”, performing from 1925 to 1929. This was also where she met Dolin again, who had already been with the company as a soloist since 1924 (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:296). When Diaghilev died in 1929, the Ballets Russes disbanded, and devastated company members like Markova and Dolin went back to London to seek new work opportunities (Garafola, 2009:376). Markova danced with Ballet Rambert (1931–35) and Vic-Wells Ballet (1932–35), and she choreographed roles in ballets for Frederick Ashton, Antony Tudor and Ninette de Valois (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:136, 296). Dolin also contributed to creating many roles with choreographers Nijinska, Balanchine and de Valois. He performed with Vic-Wells Ballet as a principal guest artist (1931–35) at the same time as Markova. In 1935 Markova and Dolin created the Markova-Dolin company, which operated until 1938 when the couple parted once again and Markova went abroad to join Ballet Russes de Monte Carlo. She is also noted for having created roles in this company’s repertoire.

Whilst Markova was abroad, Dolin travelled to Australia to join the Original Ballet Russe. This company was originally part of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, founded in 1931 by René Blum (1878–1942), French theatre director and founder of the Monte Carlo Opera, and Colonel Vassili de Basil (1888–1951), former Russian army officer (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:66). They both wanted to continue Diaghilev’s work by using the name Ballet Russe in the company’s name, and recruited dancers from the original Ballets Russes company (Lee, 2001:319). Blum was the manager, whilst Basil was the ballet impresario who organised the business and tours. In 1935, the company split due to artist differences. De Basil continued to run the company, notably under the name Original Ballet Russe, from 1939 until 1948 when the company disbanded. Meanwhile, Blum obtained international success with the company name Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo until 1941, when he was arrested in Paris by the Nazis because he was Jewish, and died in an Auschwitz concentration camp (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:136, 296). Both companies toured internationally. The Original Ballet Russe influenced classical ballet in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Central and South America, particularly in Argentina and Chile. On the other hand, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo tours – especially those to the USA – had an impact on the creation of the New York City Ballet and the American Ballet Theatre (Lee, 2001:322).

In 1940 Dolin left the Original Ballet Russe to perform with Ballet Theatre (now known as American Ballet Theatre) in New York, and in 1941 Markova joined the company until in 1945, when they both returned to England to establish their own company and perform across the country (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:136). In 1951, the company was given the title London’s Festival Ballet because of its association with and consistent performances at the Royal Festival Hall (RFH). The RFH is a post-war concert hall built in 1951 within the Southbank Centre, able to accommodate 2,500 seats for a diverse range of performances such as concerts and dance (Southbank Centre, Royal Festival Hall Auditorium, 2016). The purpose of the hall was to house the Festival of Britain, which aimed “to improve the morale of Britain after World War II and to help promote better-quality design with the hope of transforming the military-industrial capacity to civilian use. [...] The idea of the Festival of Britain was that of Sir Gerald Reid Barry and the deputy leader of the Labour Party, Herbert Morrison, the latter describing it as ‘a tonic for the nation’” (Hendrickson, 2014:322). When Markova and Dolin’s company performed at the Royal Festival Hall, they had found a new bespoke venue that would become one of Britain’s central entertainment locations in London.

Markova performed with the company as a prima ballerina until 1952, when she left to dance as a guest artist with international companies. Dolin was the artistic director until 1961 and left to become director at the Rome Opera Ballet (1961–64). Braunschweig managed many companies and artists such as the Russian Romantic Ballet, Tamara Karsavina, the Metropolitan Ballet and the Original Ballet Russe before founding the Festival Ballet with Markova and Dolin, acting as general manager until 1965 (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:76). Former dancer John Gilpin (1930–1983) followed Dolin as artistic director, expanding the company and thereby plunging it into financial difficulties. The English theatre director Donald Albery (1914–1988) succeeded Braunschweig in 1965 until 1968, stabilizing funding with the Arts Council (English National Ballet, online 2016). In 1969 the company changed its name to London Festival Ballet under the leadership of former dancer Beryl Grey (1968–1979). Another former English dancer, John Field, succeeded Grey as director from 1979 to 1984. The company mainly focused on performing the classics, which were the traditional popular ballets, until Danish dancer and choreographer Peter Schaufuss took over in 1984.

Ballet (LCB), Northern Ballet and the Portuguese National Ballet, performing many principal roles. During the 1980s Bailey was part of a close-knit community of (predominantly male) black dancers in London, where all those who were attending performing art institutions would know each other. His experience working with ENB will be discussed further in the next chapter on black dancers' employment experiences.

8.10.2 Ben Love (1965–)

Love attended ArtsEd at the age of 17 and trained for three years, funded by a grant from Nottingham County Council. He is one of the dancers Bailey refers to as having been 'streamed' into musical theatre. Love recollects his training experience:

They didn't push you to do ballet. They push you to do contemporary and I didn't want that. I wanted to do ballet when I was little and I stuck to it. I didn't listen to them, they say, "Oh you'd never get anywhere, your technique is not that strong enough yet, it's going to be hard for you to get into a ballet company". So you've got all that, all the time. (Love, 2012)

It is evident that Love was encouraged to pursue a career in contemporary or jazz whilst at school, as long as it wasn't ballet, therefore upholding their institutionalised racist perceptions. Nevertheless, he ignored these suggestions and continued to have a successful career performing ballet as mentioned above. Whilst attending ArtsEd, Love went to other ballet classes outside the institution. For instance, he learnt the Cecchetti style and entered a competition in 1989, where he remembers winning the Cecchetti boy's cup awarded by Dame Alicia Markova (1910–2004). She was a former British Ballets Russes dancer and an internationally known prima ballerina (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:295–296). The Cecchetti boy's cup was a great achievement for Love because most of the boys had trained in ballet from the age of seven or eight, whilst he had studied ballet only from the age of seventeen for three years, and won the competition (Love, 2012). Love went on to perform with European ballet companies from 1993–1999 as a soloist, as mentioned above. His working experience will be discussed in the next chapter.

8.10.3 Carol Straker (1961–)

Straker is an international dancer who has performed with “MAAS Movers Dance Company, Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre, the Martha Graham Ensemble and Michael Clark” among other companies (Carol Straker Dance Foundation (CSDF), 2015 online). She is also a choreographer, teacher and founder of her school, the Carol Straker Dance Foundation, which she established in 1987. Straker started dancing at her local dance school with her teacher Mrs Powell in East London. Apart from Straker and her two younger sisters, they were the only black children in the ballet class. She expresses her ideas on training in ballet:

I always categorise myself as a black female dancer. I've been trained by some of the best, [...] dance schools in the country, so that makes me one of the few black classically trained ballet dancers. When it comes down to which dance schools you trained at, it becomes all hierarchical, your dance family, your dance training, what you expected it to be like, what you're expected to do. [...] I went to the local dance school with Mrs Powell once a week for about two to three years [from 1971–1974]. There was this little girl called Susan who always use[d] to get the gold medals and always getting picked, and you had to kind of bear with it. (Straker, 2002)

Even with the implied favouritism bestowed on Straker's dance colleague Susan, Mrs Powell, her dance teacher, and father both thought she was a very good dancer. It was suggested that she audition for dance schools, and she was successful in gaining a place at the Legat School of Russian Ballet⁴¹ in 1974. Straker explains the audition process:

My teacher and my father thought I was quite good at dancing. I thought dancing was all right. I've always been a person who never wanted to go to the Royal Ballet. I knew

⁴¹ The Legat School of Russian Ballet was originally founded by Russian husband and wife, Nicolai Gustavovich Legat (1869–1937) and Nadine Nicolayeva (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:271) or otherwise known as Nadine Briger Nicolaeva-Legat (1895–1971) (Death Records, 2015 online) in 1926 at their home in Colet Gardens, West Kensington, London (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:271; The Mimi Legat Collection, 2015 online). Legat's family were from a theatrical background and both parents were dancers. His father Gustave taught at the Bolshoi Ballet School (Mikhailovsky Theatre, 2015 online) and the Imperial Theatre School in Russia, where Legat studied ballet (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:271). Once he graduated in 1888, he joined the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg where he became a principal dancer. While he was “too stocky to be considered an ideal danseur noble he was a brilliant technician, dancing in over 70 ballets during his career and creating roles in [Marius] Petipa's *Kalkabrinio* (1891) and [Lev] Ivanov's *Nutcracker* (1892), among others” (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:271). He also worked at the Imperial School where he taught distinguished dancers like “Anna Pavlova, Tamara Karsavina, Mikhail Fokine and Vaslav Nijinsky” (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:271), among others. In 1923, he left Russia and taught ballet in Paris and London. Legat was briefly employed as the ballet master for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in France, taking over from Enrico Cecchetti. His appointment was brief because he “followed earlier teaching methods in force at the time of Petipa. This older highly disciplined and rigid approach, as effective as it might have been, met with severe criticism from the nomadic Diaghilev dancers, most of whom had never trained in Russia. Legat was replaced by Lubov Tchernicheva” (Lee, 2002:273).

Whilst residing in London, Legat and his wife, Nicolaeva-Legat, who was also a former ballerina in her time, developed their school from their home in 1937, teaching students like Frederick Ashton, Anton Dolin, Alicia Markova, Ninette de Valois and Margot Fonteyn, among others. Legat died, leaving Nicolaeva-Legat to continue the legacy. She relocated the school to a small village in Buckinghamshire in 1939 and established a vocational boarding school. The popularity of the school grew, meaning Nicolaeva-Legat had to find a new building, which she found, and relocated to Tunbridge Wells in 1945 (The Mimi Legat Collection, 2015 online). Nicolaeva-Legat died in 1971 and the school was taken over as principal by Eunice Bartell, a former prima ballerina (Russian Ballet Society, 2016 online). The school diminished over the years because of financial difficulties, although in 2012, it merged with Bede's Senior School, East Sussex, leaving the legacy of the institution now known as Legat at St Bedes.

some of my other dance friends had been trained there. I had auditioned for Arts Education before that but I didn't get into it. Reason being because of my academic ability, I thought really. I auditioned and I got into Legat. (Straker, 2002)

It could be argued that Straker attended the school of one of the most influential founding teachers of international ballet. She describes her experience at the school:

At the age of 13 I went to the Legat School of Russian Ballet, I was the first and only black girl in that school. There were a hundred children in the school. It was a boarding school. We got partly funded. Legat was one of the people that trained Nijinsky, Pavlova. So the foundation of him as dance teacher and a Russian dancer at that point and time, became a superiority to the Royal Ballet because he'd trained Nijinsky, you've got the main man! [...] I was always anti-Royal Ballet. What they couldn't dispute, despite having a long figure, I had this phenomenal training. I trained in Cecchetti, RAD, ISTD. (Straker, 2002)

Straker thought her training at Legat was better than it would have been at the RBS; nevertheless, Legat was one of the teachers de Valois studied with as a dancer before founding the RBS in 1926 (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:464). Whilst at Legat, DTH helped to inspire Straker as a young dancer to follow her dreams. She describes this moment:

When I was at Legat, I did see Dance Theatre of Harlem and thought, "Oh my god! I could do this", they did ballet and all the other styles [...] Near to the last two years of my training, I said, "I have to go to the Dance Theatre of Harlem". That became my focus. [...] It gave me more meaning. (Straker, 2002)

Straker explains that because she was the only black female in the school, occasionally students wanted to touch her hair, out of fascination with the 'other'. Panton also had the same experience whilst boarding at the RBS, as mentioned above. Communications studies professor Yasmin Jiwani's work can be used to shed light on the ideology of white people touching black hair. She explains that white people

[...] wanting to touch and feel the strangeness that they witness – and, further, the certitude with which private space is transgressed in the interest of satisfying a personal curiosity. That Black hair should be considered strange reflects one facet of the ethnocentric White gaze, but that ones' space can be so violated demonstrates a power relation whereby those who are crossing this space in order to assuage their curiosity feel no sense of transgression because they simply take for granted the inferiority of the person whose hair they are touching. (Jiwani, 2007:131)

Whilst at boarding school in a predominantly white environment, Straker and Panton were subjected to their peer's fascination with touching their hair, resulting from the Eurocentric space and increasing their own sense of other-ness within the institution.

8.10.3.1 Straker – Urdang Academy

Urdang Academy (UA) was founded in London in 1970 by South African Leonie Urdang⁴² (1939–2001). Urdang's unique vision for equality in dance was timely, on the one hand, for a black dancer like Straker who attended the school in the late 1970s. Nevertheless, the concept of diversity did not always reach all the teachers in the school. Straker describes an incident whilst training at the school:

When I went to Urdang to train, there was this guy Papa Berish or something like that. He didn't pick me for any of the parts. So I went down to the principal's office and said, "What is the matter with that man? I see that he's got a touch of racism in him". They said, "Carol, we're going to sort it out". The owner was South African and we were working in an environment where we had a lot of South African teachers, but they were anti-apartheid and they left [the country] and that kind of stuff. (Straker, 2002)

When Straker attended UA, again, she was the only black female student in the school and thus felt she was a token student with reference to the colour of her skin, and the exception to the rule. She explains:

They want a certain type of dancers with an aesthetic look and if you don't fit, that it is very difficult. And if you do fit it, they always look at you as a token. But the thing about it, you're not always a token because you have a lot of other heritage attached to you [...] And I think that's what then annoys them that you can do all these different styles that you've conquered [...], but then they can't conquer into your styles because they don't know how to do all those other styles. [...] You have to stay focused about why you have your talent and what you're supposed to do with it. As a black dancer, you always have to stay focused that you're a black dancer. [...] When you're training you're representing the school. So you're a token and you're representing the school and you're a good dancer. (Straker, 2002)

Even though Straker considered herself as a token student at UA, it could be argued that when she was training during the late 1970s/early 1980s, black children many not have considered performing arts as a career at the time, as "many West Indians and black British would dismiss it as irrelevant to their traditions" (Khan, 1976:105). Research, writer and policy advisor Naseem Khan reported on the situation and representation of West

⁴² She studied dance at the University of Cape Town with a key interest in choreography. Disapproving of apartheid in South Africa, she left and emigrated to England in 1961 to start a school in Golders Green, relocating to Covent Garden to an old warehouse once the institution grew larger (Urdang Academy, 2015 online). UA relocated in 2007 to The Old Finsbury Town Hall, London and has a new building Urdang2, ten minutes away in Islington. Leonie Urdang's vision:

Was to break through the glass ceiling in the dance world, which at that time, only accepted a particular type of person, with a certain look. Miss Urdang looked beyond the surface and saw the individual: this laid the basis for the founding ethos of the school. The only thing that has changed since then is that the theatre world has caught up with that vision. Her commitment to equality was a founding premise for the Urdang Academy. Her mission was to ensure that talented young dancers would receive the training they deserved despite economic circumstances. She was determined that diversity would be a mark of the school, so that students of different backgrounds would be able to train there.

(Urdang Academy, 2015 online)

Indians/Africans and black British at the time for the Arts Council of Great Britain, and found that “in the professional field they have far fewer outlets in dance and drama, leading naturally to a very low level of applications to training schools” (Khan, 1976:125). In order to determine the number of black dancers that auditioned for UA during this period, further research is required, which is beyond the scope of this study at the moment. The topic of black dancers and tokenism will be discussed in the final conclusion.

8.10.3.2 Straker – Other training

Since graduating from UA at the age of eighteen in 1979, Straker participated in dance classes at other institutions and experienced covert discrimination from teachers. She describes an incident at the ENB dance class:

It's not until you go out of the school when it all starts. I went to an audition at the English National Ballet, when Peter Schaufuss⁴³ was there. I just went to do a class and I was already in Michael Clark and Co. One of the teachers said, “Let's show them how the Anglo Saxons like to jump” or something. I felt the teachers were very threatened by my training. (Straker, 2002)

Why did the teacher have to make those comments in front of Straker? Was her intention to belittle Straker? As mentioned in Chapter Two, sociologists John Solomos and Les Back (1996:42-45) cited anatomist and physician Robett Knox (1850), who considered Anglo-Saxons to be the dominant and superior members of the human race.

8.10.3.3 Straker – Class at Pineapple Dance Studio

Straker experienced another incident at one of the most prominent dance centres in London, Pineapple Dance Studios⁴⁴ [PDS], Straker remembers taking a ballet class at PDS and the

⁴³ Peter Schaufuss was born into ballet: both his parents, Frank Schaufauss and Mona Vangsaae, studied with and were employed by the Danish Royal Ballet. He performed with many international companies including the National Ballet of Canada (1967–68 and 1977–83), the London Festival Ballet (1970–74), and New York City Ballet (1974–77) (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:398). Whilst he was employed with LFB as director from 1984–1990, he brought new repertoire to the company, for example through the works of Alvin Ailey, Paul Taylor, Michael Clark, Siobhan Davies and Christopher Bruce (English National Ballet, online 2016; Craine and Mackrell, 2010:398). It could be argued that Schaufuss was one of the first choreographers to introduce African American choreographic works like Alvin Ailey's repertoire into a mainstream British ballet company, though this concept needs further research. He also invited legendary artists like Kenneth MacMillan, Frederick Ashton and Natalia Makarova to work with the company (English National Ballet, 2016; Craine and Mackrell, 2010:398). During his employment, in 1988 the company opened the English National Ballet School in Chelsea, London and changed its name to the English National Ballet in 1989.

⁴⁴ Covent Garden. PDS was founded by former model Debbie Moore (1946–) in 1979 (Pineapple, 2015 online). After experiencing an over-active thyroid which made her gain weight, she gave up her modelling career, and was

teacher was persistently trying to get her to align her pelvis or 'tuck under her bottom' before preparing to do some pirouettes:

I remember one time, I was in Pineapple doing a class and the woman was so busy tapping my bottom. So I thought, "So you want me to stay like this?" So I went back to a normal position and did three turns and ended it. She couldn't say nothing. After she fidgeted around with me, I had to go back to the normal position to do the three turns right. She only asked for two. (Straker, 2002)

In this instance, the teacher constantly drew Straker's attention to aligning her pelvis before she prepared to perform a pirouette. Alignment of the pelvis is a correction that teachers often look out for when teaching students ballet: to achieve this alignment they are often told, "keep your pelvis directly over the center of your feet. Keep your pelvis directly over your heels, without sticking out your rear end" (Speck and Cisneros, 2003:54). Straker's bottom and the alignment of her body did not prevent her from performing the pirouette. As mentioned in Chapter Two, historically the 'protruding' buttocks were considered one of the main anatomical characteristics of the black body, as evidenced in literature on Sarah Baartman (Holmes, 2007:2). Therefore, the teacher was clearly uncomfortable because of this stereotypical image and incorrectly perceived that Straker would be restricted in her movement.

8.10.3.4 Straker – Training at DTH

When Straker was a student at Legat in 1974, she mentioned seeing DTH perform at Sadler's Wells, London. Since then, she was inspired to train and follow her dream to dance with the company. At the age of nineteen she went to Harlem, New York to join DTH and train. She describes her experience:

I really wanted to be in Dance Theatre of Harlem Company. I went there with the impression that I'd have to work really hard, but I'd already got to the level that I was really ready for the company. But because of the way Arthur Mitchell is as a dancer or artistic director, his kind of politics and the way he is as a person, he likes to think he made people and stuff. His internal behavioural pattern, "I made you", whatever. At that point of time, it was a little too late because I'd already done my training, he couldn't really say any more.

At DTH, there was the first student year level. They had lots of different levels of dancers coming in. Some dancers had been dancing for maybe a year or two years and some had danced for quite a long time. And he set up an apprenticeship kind of

advised by a homeopathic doctor to take dance lessons to help reduce her weight (BBC, 2015 online). The dance centre she attended closed down, so she decided to open a studio in a deserted warehouse in Covent Garden. Her inspiration was that anyone could participate in dance classes, from beginners to professionals. Moore has also become known for designing a series of famous dance clothing lines.

thing for the company, so half the company were on apprenticeships, but also dancing main roles in the company. I think it was something he had to do so he got his funding or something like that. But it was a bit of precarious way the company was run. And plus, I was quite a dark-skinned black woman and he liked light-skinned black women. So the opposite was kind of going on. So, there was [a] slight kind of internal conflict. A lot of the teachers thought I was really a good dancer and it was really down to him.

Like I said, when I first got to Dance Theatre of Harlem, it kind of made it worse because of the different levels of dancing, I mean Karl Shook, he was one of the artistic directors at the time and he use[d] to teach a lot of classes and his classes use[d] to consist of really, really basic work like quarter turns [...]. Being the dancer I was always very technical. Being that kind of dancer to groom for nearly a year, right!

(Straker, 2002)

It was unfortunate that Straker was not offered employment with the company, because she was highly trained they felt they could not mould her as a student for the company. Although her technical ability was at the highest level and she was ready to join the company, Straker believed that Mitchell preferred 'lighter skinned girls'. In this instance, she felt that she was discriminated against because of her past training and the shade of her skin. It is ironic that Mitchell, a dark-skinned black man, should discriminate against Straker, given that he experienced racialisation himself. For instance, when partnering with a white woman, Diana Adams, in George Balanchine's Agon in 1965, the southern American television networks refused to air the performance because of segregation laws, as was discussed in Chapter Five (Banes, 1998:207; Mason, 1991:395). Dance cultural historian Brenda Dixon Gottschild's work can be used to explain some of the complexities of the issues of dark skin and light skin:

Black skin represents stamina and physical robustness; white represents delicacy, fragility, and a social class that is not obliged to toil in the sun. [...] Thus, to be definitively dissociated from maleness and its concomitant physical prowess (and the labouring lower classes of society), women – even black women – needed to be light-skinned in order to be counted as acceptably female and respectably distanced from the opposite gender.

(Gottschild, 2003:187)

Gottschild's explanation can be applied to black dancers who were subjected to discrimination through representations of skin colour. This will be discussed in the next chapter. The dark-skinned female dancer was scrutinised because she was thought to be more masculine in this instance, and not respectable within society. It could be argued that although Mitchell experienced racism whilst he was a dancer with the New York City Ballet (1956–1969), he may have internalised Eurocentric values, believing that lighter-skinned dancers were more marketable and acceptable to audiences than dark-skinned performers, therefore, as Gottschild (2003:187) describes, creating a "black-on-black bias". The topic of

dark-skinned and light-skinned dancers, or 'shadism', requires further research to consider whether shades of skin colour has an impact on the roles performed, and on selection by the artistic directors of companies. This will be analysed in the final conclusion.

Straker has studied at some of the world's most renowned dance schools and training institutions including Legat, UA, ENB, PDS and DTH. Whilst attending classes throughout her career, she experienced many acts of covert racial discrimination from both white and black dance professionals. These acts included touching, as at Legat when students felt her hair, or the dance teacher at PDS tapping her bottom. She experienced exclusion from school productions at UA and was discriminated against at DTH because she was dark-skinned. The topic of exclusion will be further investigated in the next chapter on black dancers and employment, to evaluate whether they have experienced exclusion from performing roles when working in ballet companies.

8.10.4 Julie Felix (1957–)

Felix is currently the head of dance at Saint Martin's Girls' School in Solihull and a biography about her experiences as a ballet dancer of colour in Britain and the USA has been published: Brickbats and Tutus by John Plimmer (2015). Felix's mother is English and her father is from St Lucia in the Caribbean. She was a former ballerina at DTH from 1977 to 1987. Felix started dance training at the Joyce Butler School of Dance (JBSD) Ealing, West London, where Garrett-Glassman also attended as mentioned above, and she left a year before Felix joined (Felix, 2015). When she attended the JBSD, Felix was the only dancer of colour. She remembers not enjoying her time there or getting much encouragement to pursue a career as a dancer because "Ms Butler said 'that I didn't have the body'. I was absolutely like a rail. She said, 'For musical theatre they want girls for West End shows and musicals, they like them a little more buxom, don't they?' She didn't encourage me much" (Felix 2015). It is surprising that Butler did not encourage Felix whilst she was training, especially in comparison to Garrett-Glassman, to whom Butler seemed very supportive and even left her part of the school to manage after her death in 2005 (Garrett-Glassman, 2010).

Felix trained from the age of 9 to 16 at the JBSD and got her Equity card working in pantomime, to Butler's surprise (Felix 2015).

8.10.4.1 Felix and Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance

Felix auditioned for ArtsEd and got a place in the school; nevertheless, she was not able to get funding. In 1974, she auditioned for the former Rambert School of classical ballet, now known as Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance⁴⁵, then located at the Mercury Theatre in Notting Hill Gate. She was successful in gaining a place at the school, obtaining 75% funding from her local authority, and her parents paid 25% towards school fees (Felix 2015). Felix describes the relationship and events under the directorship of Angela Ellis whilst she was training from 1974–77:

Angela Ellis was absolutely amazing and she saw totally through my colour and saw me for my talent, really. At the beginning of my third year, toward Christmas, the then-called London Festival Ballet, which is now English National Ballet, run by, directed by Beryl Grey, Dame Beryl Grey now, asked Mrs Ellis [to] choose her top ballet students to be extras. Elmhurst Ballet School, they do that, they send their top students and do a couple of performances with the Birmingham Royal Ballet. Most of the schools do a performance with the companies. Doesn't guarantee there's going to be any work for them. You kind of think that if they've been chosen that there's a good opportunity that they would be chosen.

Myself and another girl were offered this opportunity to do Rudolf Nureyev's [ballet]. He was working with the London Festival Ballet at the time. So Mrs Ellis sent the two of us. We witness Nureyev and how he'd walk into the rehearsal room late in those big brown boots of his and his fur coat! Do a couple of yellings and he'd do half an hour and whoosh out of the room. And then we'd be left to try and put it together, what he wanted. So that was a great opportunity.

Dame Beryl Grey contacted Angela Ellis and said she really liked me and would love to offer a contract for the company, however, because of the colour of my skin, she could not offer a contract because it would ruin the line-up of the swan, the *corps de ballet*. Angela Ellis actually told me that. She was a wonderful lady. If she hadn't told me, it would have had a detrimental effect on my progress and taking my career further probably. She knew me so well, she knew how determined I was. So with that

⁴⁵ RSB & CD was founded by Polish dancer, choreographer and teacher Marie Rambert (1888–1982) in 1920 (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:365). Rambert was born in Warsaw, Poland as Cyvia Rambam, she later changed her name to Miriam Ramberg, then finally she settled on Marie Rambert. She was inspired to participate in dance when she watched Isadora Duncan and took ballet classes in Paris. Working with Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes, she assisted Nijinsky's choreographic works such as "The Rite of Spring" (1913). Rambert also trained with Enrico Cecchetti before relocating to England in 1914. Not only did she found the school in 1920, but from the students' performances she also created the Rambert Dance Company in 1926. Known as "an inspired talent spotter and legendary bully, Rambert nurtured many of Britain's most important choreographers, including [Fredrick] Ashton, [Antony] Tudor, [and Andrée] Howard" (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:365), to name but a few. Rambert married playwright Ashley Dukes in 1918 and they had two daughters, Angela Ellis (1920–2006) and Helena Dun (1923–) who both trained at the school. Ellis was a dancer in the company (1943–7) and she married David Ellis, also a dancer in the company from 1946 (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:152). The school was relocated in 1983 to Twickenham, Middlesex, and is currently under the directorship of Amada Britton, who took over from Ross McKim after he served 30 years (1985–2015) before retiring in July 2015.

knowledge it made me even more determined, rather than saying, "That's, that then, I'm giving up!"
(Felix, 2015)

Felix did not get the opportunity to join ENB due to the colour of her skin. Being an expert dancer was not enough to break through the levels of institutional racism in the company. Evidently, and similarly to Garrett-Glassman at the time, ballet institutions like the RBS and ENB could be blatantly honest about their problematic issue with skin colour. It is interesting to note that neither the RBS nor the ENB had a problem with either dancer's technical ability. Felix worked with Nureyev and Grey was highly impressed with her work. Was it aesthetics or Felix's race that stopped Grey from employing her? She explains what happened after the incident:

When Dance Theatre of Harlem came to England, they were doing the Royal Variety performance and I went to do a class with them while they were at Sadler's Wells. And Arthur Mitchell offered me a job and I turned it down. So when I went back to school and told Angela Ellis that I've been offered a contract and turned it down. She hit the roof! She said, "Darling, darling, one never turns any contract down". She was so cross. I said, "I don't want to go to New York". I really did not want to go. If I was going to join a ballet company, I'd join one in Europe [...] with the possibility of joining a company in England. I felt if I went to New York I'd never come back.

So Dance Theatre of Harlem came back to do a season in London and this time Angela Ellis said, "You go and do a class there and get yourself a contract". This time I went there and did a class and Arthur Mitchell came up to me and said, "So you're back! I'd like to offer you a contract and I'm not going to do it three times. So you either accept this now or that's that!" So I thought, I'd better, so I accepted it and went back to Angela Ellis. I was the only girl that got a contract out of my third year at school. She said, "Well done, darling".
(Felix, 2015)

Felix's early training was not a pleasant experience at the JBSD, though her passion for the art form helped her to pursue her career. Her later years of training seemed more enjoyable, although when she worked for Grey at the ENB, she was reminded that the colour of her skin was an issue. This was apparent as racism was a part of the socio-cultural environment during the 1970s. Felix was employed with DTH for eleven years before returning to Britain in 1987 to mentor and teach students at established dance institutions like the RBS and BRB, to mention a few (Felix, 2015).

8.11 Conclusion

The first half of this chapter focused on the experience of black British dancers and their training at one of the world's most prestigious schools, the Royal Ballet. Ballet dancers Garrett-Glassman, Williams, Panton, Dynott and Gotobed trained from the 1970s to 2004.

Panton, Dynott and Gotobed attended the Junior Associates and boarded at White Lodge in Richmond from the age of 11. Only Panton experienced extreme levels of racial discrimination from his peers and through the covert actions of the school, by excluding him from certain roles in productions. Dynott was a graduate from RB's outreach programme Chance to Dance, and he experienced minimal acts of discrimination, aside from his teacher Beckley, although she may have overlooked him or personally disliked him. Gotobed had a good experience whilst training at the JA. From the age of 16, Garrett-Glassman and Williams trained at the Upper School, senior associates (SA) at Baron's Court, London. Garrett-Glassman enjoyed her training despite being told at the beginning of her course that they would not employ her because she was black. Whilst Williams had reservations about the RBS not training black students, he also liked his time at the school. Panton, Dynott and Gotobed also attended SA, although Panton's newfound freedom from boarding school led to his leaving, because the school did not accept his new image. Dynott achieved the bronze medal at the Genée Awards, whilst Gotobed toured with the RBC performing major parts abroad, but she was not offered the chance to perform these roles in the UK. It could be argued that all dancers who attended the RBS – even Williams, who was asked on behalf of the school to advise Panton not to wear his Rastafarian T-shirt – had witnessed or experienced acts of racism over the span of thirty years. All dancers were successful in finding work with other ballet companies in Britain and abroad.

When analysing black dancers' experiences of training at other performing arts institutions, the evidence shows that they too experienced acts of racial discrimination. Bailey refers to his friends Love and Wallace who were passionate about ballet. He said that they experienced being categorised and pushed to attend contemporary and jazz classes whilst training at ArtsEd. Although efforts to contact and interview Wallace were not successful, Love was available to be interviewed and shared his training experience at ArtsEd. He recalls the lack of encouragement to learn ballet from his teachers, and it can be argued that black dancers were racially categorised, as mentioned above. Straker trained at many dance institutions and her experience of discrimination varied from her peers touching her hair at Legat to a teacher tapping her bottom at Pineapple, as mentioned earlier. She also

experienced “black on black” discrimination from Mitchell in DTH. Felix’s early training at JBSD and lack of encouragement from Butler could have discouraged her from training further. Her experience whilst working with ENB, along with Grey’s comments, may have created more doubt about continuing a career in ballet. All these dancers also went on to find employment in other major ballet companies in Britain and abroad. Evidently, whether black dancers train at the RBS or any other performing arts institutions in Britain, they have witnessed or have experienced institutional racism on different levels, as described in this chapter. Many dancers interviewed never pursued their passion to become a ballet dancer because of their training experience, and pursued careers in other dance genres such as jazz, contemporary or commercial dance. This therefore achieves what the gatekeepers of some ballet institutions want, by keeping the aesthetic perception of ballet as white. The next chapter examines black dancers and their work experience in ballet institutions.

CHAPTER NINE

BLACK DANCERS AND WORKING EXPERIENCE

Carlos Acosta, principal guest artist for the Royal Ballet and one of the world's most successful black dancers, agrees that the statistics are discouraging. "The percentage of classical black ballet dancers around the world is sadly minimal, which is quite embarrassing," he says. "In most companies, when a talented black dancer is chosen as a member, they don't know how to cast them properly [...]"

(Goldhill and Marsh, 2012 online)

9.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to evaluate black British dancers' working experience with ballet companies in Britain. Even though very few black dancers have been able to find employment with British companies, there are nevertheless examples of their employment with the English National Ballet (ENB), Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) and Northern Ballet (NB), as well as the former London City Ballet (LCB) and City Ballet of London. Trained dancers who were unable to acquire jobs with British ballet companies found employment in other dance genres such as contemporary dance or musical theatre companies. Dancers who continued looking for work in ballet often went abroad to join European ballet companies such as the Vienna Festival Ballet (VFB) in Austria, Béjart Ballet Lausanne in Switzerland and Ballet Gulbenkian in Portugal. One dancer went to the USA to join Joffrey Ballet in Chicago.

The lack of opportunities for black dancers in the ballet establishment in the UK is extensively reported throughout this thesis: because of this unavailability, many have joined companies such as Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) in New York or Ballet Black in London in order to continue their art form in an environment where they felt racially accepted and able to perform a variety of roles based on their talent. Many of the male dancers interviewed were sometimes fortunate enough to perform small key roles in ballet repertoire. However, in the ranks of ballet, all dancers start in a company by performing in the *corps de ballet* before working their way up the ladder to Principal Dancers (Greskovic, 2005:165). All the dancers interviewed performed roles in the *corps de ballet* and had few opportunities to perform other parts. Since this thesis focuses on black dancers' experience in British ballet companies,

examples from international companies and the documentation of black dancers in black ballet companies will be reserved for a future examination.

Darryl Jaffray, the former Director of Education of the Royal Opera House (1997–2006), shares her experience of working with mainstream ballet organisations and their perceptions of black dancers. She recalls an incident:

I went to a certain organisation's board meeting, [and] somebody said, "Well, we don't want black dancers in our company, let them set up their own ballet companies". And nobody else said anything. So that night Antony Dowell, who was there, rang me and said, "Are you alright?" [I said,] "Are you frightened that I'm going to leak to the press or resign?" He said "Yes, but this person is extremely old". Yes, but? So, yes these things happen. In general, I think things have improved. Not that there aren't still people that say that or think it. But on a whole they are very old and there are fewer and fewer of them. And actually nowadays they do get tackled or if somebody tackles them they're not just written off as mad. So from that point of view there's progress and I think in the world of ballet, goodness knows how, but I think a lot of the young dancers coming through have a very different view and are more realistic and fair and open minded and all that stuff. So I think things will change in the long run. But you have to be so patient. (Jaffray, 2010)

Taking Jaffray's experience into consideration, this chapter will evaluate whether attitudes have changed from the perspective of black British dancers working in British ballet companies. Interviews with dancers who have related their experiences will be analysed with reference to the theoretical concepts discussed in previous chapters. This chapter also explores the audition process, and in cases where dancers were unsuccessful, it will assess whether these decisions were reasonable or whether dancers encountered acts of racial discrimination. The black dancers interviewed here have worked from the 1980s to the present, and include: Evan Williams, Ben Love, Denzil Bailey, Darren Panton, Shevelle Dynott and Chantelle Gotobed.

9.1 Evan Williams – Birmingham Royal Ballet (1991–1994)

As mentioned in the introduction, there are currently only four black dancers in the company, two of which are British: Tyrone Singleton, a principal, and Brandon Lawrence, a soloist (Birmingham Royal Ballet, 2016). Evan Williams was the first black male dancer to be employed with the BRB in 1991, and he describes his working experience. After graduating

from the Royal Ballet School, Williams joined the Birmingham Royal Ballet⁴⁶ in 1991. He recollects that the most memorable performances when working with the company were “working with the creations. I got to work with Matthew Hart [...] and William Tuckett, he did a piece to Jimmy Hendrix that was good to do” (Williams, 2010). During the time Williams was in the company, Hart (1972–) was a British dancer/choreographer with the RBC. From 1991, he was an artist in the company and worked his way up to soloist before leaving the company in 1996 to join Rambert Dance Company (1996–2000) (Debretts, 2016). Tuckett (1969–), also a British dancer and choreographer, performed with the RBC from 1990 to 2002, where he is currently a Guest Principal Character Artist (Royal Opera House, 2016). Williams (2010) describes the less enjoyable aspect of his involvement: “Throughout my time at the Royal Ballet I was an extra, all the sort-of standing on the side. All the non-dance type roles in the *corps de ballet*”.

In 1991 Williams was photographed performing the role of the Moor in Petrouchka with the company. It is important to remember that African American Randolph Sawyer performed this part in 1931, as described in Chapter Five. Why are black dancers so often cast in this role? It is possible that the artistic directors colour-cast the dancers in both instances. As mentioned in Chapter Five, this ballet was originally choreographed by renowned Russian choreographer Michel Fokine (1880–1942) in 1911 and was first performed by the Ballets Russes dancers, who blacked-up to perform the role of the Moor (Banes, 1998:69). Petrouchka (1911) is about three puppets – Petrouchka, a ballerina and a Moor – who are brought to life by a magician. Petrouchka falls in love with the ballerina, but the ballerina is attracted to and seduced by the Moor. Petrouchka later tries to break up the couple, but the Moor fights and kills him with a blow to the head with his sword. The character of the Moor is usually blacked-up, or on occasion it has been known to appear in blueface (Wachtel, 1998). Williams was pictured with white make-up, emphasising the eyes and the mouth, and exaggerated red lips, and he also wore white gloves (Corbis Image, 2016 Figure 2)

⁴⁶ In 1946 Ninette de Valois founded the Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB), previously known as The Sadler’s Wells Royal Ballet, which was a touring sister company to the Royal Ballet Company, as mentioned in Chapter Nine. It was under the directorship of Peter Wright (1926–) from 1975–1995 that it relocated from London to Birmingham in 1990 under its current name, BRB. In 1995, former dancer/choreographer David Bintley (1957–) became the director of the school associated with the company and still holds this position.



Figure 2: Williams pictured performing *Petrushka*, Corbis, 1991

The caricature of the Moor resembles minstrel stereotypes of the 'happy go lucky' wide-grinning man portrayed from the 1830s until the late 1970s in the USA (Lott, 1993:73; Gottschild, [1996] 1998:125). Minstrel shows were also popular in England, and in 1947 the BBC asked producer George Mitchell (1917–2002) to organise “some Negro spiritual songs for a radio show”, and in 1958 this idea led to The Black and White Minstrel Show, which ran until 1978 when it was finally deemed racist (Bourne, 2005:5). Historian Stephen Bourne (2005:5) notes that: “When the BBC finally pulled the plug in 1978 there was a huge sigh of relief from its critics, and an even bigger outcry from white viewers who had grown up with the Minstrels in music halls, and turned a blind eye to the accusations of racism”.

The image of Williams as a black man portrayed as a minstrel in the ballet is very disturbing, particularly since minstrel shows in Britain had ended in 1978. Still, blacking-up in ballet continued as recently as 2008 when the current ballet master of BRB Dominic Antonucci performed the role of the Moor, and little was mentioned in press coverage at the time about the dancer's blacking-up (Monahan, 2008). Williams (2010) describes how he felt performing the role:

Sometimes I wanted to dance in a soloist role in a ballet and so I did it, pure, pure, pure naivety. That ballet is as racist as it gets! Even the fact that the company was doing the ballet [...] Now I think a company like the Royal Ballet had no business even doing that ballet. And then to ask me to do that role in my young naive self, there's no way in hell

that I would do something like that now! I was that young, I wanted to dance, I wanted to be given an opportunity, you know, I'll do it. Horrible!

I was going to give it the best that I had and perform it well with the hope it would give me the opportunity to do other things. It's a role that I would not do now and would not advocate a white dancer doing it, let alone a black dancer doing it or anybody doing it. It was a racist piece and I did it out of pure naivety. I was given the solo and that's the nature of a dancer, to be given opportunities. Not necessarily questioning when you're young and naïve the political statement your making. You're not necessarily asking those questions.

There are elements of the ballet that portray racial stereotypes of a black man: for instance, in the Moor's Room he plays with a coconut. The dance movements are similar to those of a monkey playing with a ball, therefore portraying black people as having primitive associations, as was mentioned in Chapter Two (Lawrence, [1819] 1984:170). Another stereotype of the Moor is shown in his sexual advances towards the ballerina. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall's (1932–2014) theory on the power and fantasy of stereotypes can be used to describe the character of the Moor in this ballet: "When blacks act 'macho', they seem to challenge the stereotype (that they are only children) – but in the process, they confirm the fantasy which lies behind or is the 'deep structure' of the stereotype (that they are aggressive, oversexed and over-endowed)" (Hall, 1997:263).

It is unfortunate that when Williams performed the role of the Moor in Petrushka, he portrayed many racial stereotypes in this narrative ballet. Whether the character of the Moor is performed by a black or white dancer, blacking-up should not continue in the twenty-first century. Williams was with the BRB for three years, as he recollects (Williams, 2010). He describes the time that he spent with the company:

My whole time at the Royal Ballet, as I was saying, a big part of it was based on skin colour and not just seen as a dancer, and seen as a black dancer. Ultimately, it doesn't matter about teachers, choreographers, whatever [...] ultimately it's about the opinions at the top and their influence. This is not just in the dance world, but any world, ultimately the artistic direction of the company and their influence and their say.
(Williams, 2010)

Williams states that the reason for his experience at BRB being that of a 'black dancer' rather than simply a 'dancer' was due to the artistic direction of the company, which at the time was directed by Peter Wright. He implies that the company's ideology and attitude towards black dancers in ballet began with Wright's perceptions/dominant ideology, which were then shared and carried out to some degree throughout the institution. In this instance,

cultural theorist Stuart Hall's theory, can be used to emphasise this idea that the "dominant classes subject the masses to ideologies which make the social relations of domination and oppression appear natural and so mystify the 'real' conditions of existence" (Hall, 1997:348). Whilst Wright maybe penetrating these ideologies throughout the institution, Williams can be considered and felt like a token black dancer in the company. Art Historian Kobena Mercer's ideas on tokenism notes that: "In such a political economy of racial representation where the part stands in for the whole, the visibility of a few token black public figures serves to legitimate, and reproduce, the visibility, and lack of access to public discourse, of the community as a whole" (1994:240). Williams left BRB in 1994 and joined Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in New York.

9.2 Ben Love (1996–1997)

Love's first professional job with a ballet company was in 1993, when he was invited to perform with the Portuguese National Ballet. He danced with them for one and a half years before coming back to London, where director Harold King⁴⁷ offered him a contract with the LCB from 1996 to 1997. Love (2012) recollects his encounter with King:

He saw me in class and asked me, "Where are you now?" I said in the Portuguese National Ballet. He said, "Listen, if you want to come back to London there's a contract with the London City Ballet". I thought OK, and I joined the London City Ballet. That time Princess Diana was the Patron.

Love was a soloist with the company. He said, "I got mainly soloist roles, I did loads of different roles, that was good, that was a challenge. I stayed with the company for a year and a half" (Love, 2012). Ben Love, Denzil Bailey and Darren Panton all worked with LCB, and they share their experiences in this chapter. Love was fortunate to acquire his next job whilst

⁴⁷ South African Harold King (1949–) founded London City Ballet in 1978. He trained at the University of Cape Town in 1965, then joined the Cape Town City Ballet, becoming a soloist in 1966 (Who's Who Southern Africa, 2016). In 1970, he was a dancer and choreographer for The Western Theatre Ballet, formerly known as the Scottish Ballet (Scottish Ballet, 2016) in London. A few years later he founded his company, London City Ballet (LCB), in 1978. Princess Diana was a patron of the company from 1983 to 1995. The company was staffed with 75 employees which included "dancers, musicians, administrative and technical staff" (Merrett, 1993:1085) that toured British theatres and Sri Lanka in 1985, performing both traditional and new ballet repertoire. Due to financial difficulties, the company closed in 1993 (Merrett, 1993:1085). In 1996 King founded his second company, City Ballet of London, which operated until 2001 when the company dissolved (Jones, 2001:97).

he was dancing with the company, offered to him by Christopher Gable, the former Artistic Director for Northern Ballet Theatre⁴⁸ (renamed Northern Ballet in 2014).

9.2.1 Love and the Northern Ballet Theatre (1998–1999)

Love (2012) describes his first encounter with Gable and being offered a job with the company in Manchester:

I got approached by the Northern Ballet Theatre [Christopher Gable, Artistic Director], he asked me to join the ballet company, so I did, up in Manchester. Christopher Gable, he was at the Royal Ballet, he was a great dancer. It was a hard one, we did 120 performances a year. Hard-core touring. And then my body was like, I can't take this, my body was going to break up. Most stages were hard. I asked him, "Do you mind if I take a break?" He was like "Yeah, you can take a break, take six months off and then come back". I said, "Yeah, OK". Then I came back to London.

Love's website, states that he performed many "soloist and principal roles with the company including The Rite of Spring, Schéhérazade, Romeo and Juliet, The Nutcracker and Raymonda" (Ballet Soul, 2016 online). When Love went to London he never returned to the NBT. He worked with Paul Henry in Norway for four months, joined the Norwegian National Ballet for a year, and then worked with Christopher Huggins from Alvin Ailey, to list but a few international companies and artists throughout his career (Love, 2012). Though Love started training as a dancer at the age of 17, as discussed in Chapter Eight, his dedication to the art form has credited him with fortunate opportunities to perform with two British companies and

⁴⁸ The Northern Ballet Theatre was originally named Northern Dance Theatre, founded by Canadian dancer and choreographer Laverne Meyer (1935–2008) in Manchester, 1969. Meyer trained at the Sadler's Wells School and the Rambert School, and studied with Martha Graham (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:303). In 1957 he performed in Bristol with a new company, the Western Theatre Ballet, founded by Elizabeth West (1927–1962) and Peter Darrell (1929–1987). He was employed as a ballet master and associate director in 1964, until he left the company in 1968. Northern Dance Theatre started with 11 dancers, supported by the Arts Council and North West Arts (Northern Ballet, 2016). The company toured small theatre venues and performed classical and modern works, including some of Meyer's repertoire (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:303). In 1975 Meyer resigned in order to teach and the directorship was succeeded by British dancer, choreographer Robert de Warren (1933–). He also trained at the Sadler's Wells School in the early 1950s before pursuing a career with international ballet companies such as the National Ballet of Uruguay (1954), Covent Garden Opera Ballet (1958–60), and Stuttgart Ballet (1960–62) amongst others (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:480). He renamed the company Northern Ballet Theatre and employed a total of 28 dancers, recruited from international countries including China, Japan, Italy and France. They toured abroad in Italy and Hong Kong (Northern Ballet, 2016 online). The company acquired a royal patron, Princess Margaret, the Countess of Snowdon, and Rudolf Nureyev became a performing guest artist. De Warren left in 1987 to work at the opera house La Scala in Milan and became director of ballet and artistic supervisor.

British dancer and actor Christopher Gable (1940–1998) succeeded de Warren's role as artistic director. He studied at the Royal Ballet and toured with the company in 1957, achieving the position of principal in 1961 (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:182). His acting career influenced the company's style, which became known for having a more "classical dance drama" edge and brought a more diverse audience to its performances (Northern Ballet, 2016 online). Whilst he was at Northern Ballet Theatre, in 1982 he co-founded the Central School of Ballet with Ann Stannard (1935–) in London. The company moved from Manchester to Leeds under the directorship of Stefano Giannetti (1999–2001) in 2000.

renowned artists, and international companies around the world – a case of being in the right place at the right time.

The Northern Ballet Theatre present artistic director David Nixon (2001–) manages 46 dancers, and there are currently two black/mixed-race male dancers in the company (as mentioned in the Introduction). Luke Francis, a dancer from Birmingham, is the only black British member. Dancers Ben Love and Chantelle Gotobed both worked at Northern Ballet during their careers and share their experiences in this chapter.

9.3 First black dancers in London Festival Ballet

Many black British dancers performed with London Festival Ballet before it became known as the English National Ballet. As mentioned in the Introduction, there are currently six ENB dancers from the African diaspora. Only one, Shevelle Dynott from London, is black and British. Dancers Denzil Bailey and Dynott both worked with ENB during their careers, and they share their experiences later in this chapter.

As mentioned in Chapter Six, the Scarman Report⁴⁹ (1981) was issued, funding measures were actioned to increase opportunities in the arts for minorities. Similar procedures were considered in the Devlin Report Stepping Forward (1989:64), which highlighted the need for training opportunities to attract more black students, hence increasing employment openings and cultural representation in British ballet companies. Bailey gives an account of how the

⁴⁹ The Scarman Report, "highlighted the cultural marginalisation of the UK's ethnic minorities, forced a review of funding and cultural policies towards black arts practitioners in the public sphere" (Donnell, 2001:115). Through funding from the Arts Council and the Greater London Council (GLC) led by Ken Livingston, the aim was that minority communities would increase their representation within British arts forms, and therefore increase Labour party votes (Hewison, [1995]1997:238). Bailey (2010) gives his account of this period and the increased representation of black people in employment:

In the mid-80s all this big racial thing came out about all the blacks working in different types of society. And one of the things that came out was television and the arts. And it was all down to Ken Livingston, he loved black people, "Red" Ken. Back in my council in Brent, started the whole thing about people should be hiring black people. People should be hiring the same quota like they do in the States or get their grants cut because they're not representing society. So in America it's different because they have that law, [out of] every three/four people one has to be ethnic, that's law. Over here, they said they were going to do that but black people said no, we don't want that here, we want to be taken on our own credit or own merit. So America is different and over here, they said no. So in the end everything was just a white-wash. It was an all-white thing or all-black thing or one sporadic black face chucked in here and there.

first black dancers were employed. It was difficult to locate these dancers for interviews – Noel Wallace, the first black dancer to be employed with LFB in 1985, Brenda Edwards, the first black female dancer also employed with LFB in 1986, and Patrick Lewis, another dancer employed in 1986. It is unfortunate that their first-hand experiences could not be shared here, although thankfully Bailey could account for their presence in ballet history. He recalls:

Noel [Wallace] had just gone when I joined the company [1988]. In those early days, I remember Noel was dancing with Wayne Sleep and company. Noel was one of the big sort of stars, he was a fantastic dancer. He had legs [long legs], pirouettes, nice technique, everything. He said he auditioned for [Peter] Schaufuss and he said, “Yeah, yeah ok, but no thank you”. He [Schaufuss] said he was quite good but didn’t take him. I’m not sure why they didn’t take him. All this thing came out, Noel was on this tour with Wayne Sleep with Dash⁵⁰ and the Hot Shoe Show⁵¹ and stuff. This time we’re talking about ’81, ’82. Noel was encouraged to do class with the company because he had a really good technique [...] Then this big thing came up that if you don’t employ one or two black people by summer, your grant’s going to get cut and the company’s going to fold, basically. So, Schaufuss was like, “Call that black guy that was in class last week and get him here now!” So Noel got a call out of the blue saying, they got a contract from the Festival Ballet if you want it. And that’s how it came about apparently and that was the GLC. That’s how Noel came to Festival Ballet or something like that.

Patrick Lewis was next, he trained at Rambert and then went abroad to Sweden. He came back a soloist in Sweden after five years. We used to dance with each other in the company all the time. He auditioned and then Schaufuss took him in the company.

Then Brenda Edwards came, because Ulysses Dove apparently came to choreograph a piece. I’m not sure [if] Brenda came to work with Ulysses Dove or [if] she was doing something else. I’m not sure how about Brenda’s connection with the Festival Ballet. Schaufuss fell in love with this girl. This girl was unbelievable and offered a contract for her to stay. Ulysses Dove was a big choreographer from Ailey. And Dove was brutal to work with apparently. Brutal! He’d have the dancers in the studio 8am every morning on tour. Full out! Brutal. You would never work with this guy; this guy didn’t play at all! Great work. American. Americans don’t play sometimes. (Bailey, 2010)

Bailey’s account of Wallace’s experience of joining the company is surprising, since in one instance he is described as a talented dancer who worked with former Royal Ballet dancer Wayne Sleep, and in the other instance Bailey’s account implies that due to company status and funding, the LFB would only employ Wallace to demonstrate its racial equality.

9.4 Brenda Edwards

Other sources were found to support these dancers’ involvement with the company. For example, a much earlier account of Edwards’ work with the company was documented in

⁵⁰ Dash was a dance group founded by former Royal Ballet dancer Wayne Sleep in the 1980s, which toured the world (Wayne Sleep, 2016).

⁵¹ The Hot Shoe Show was a dance show co-presented with Bonnie Langford, and Bits and Pieces was also inspired by Wayne Sleep and televised on BBC in the 1980s (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:413).

2001, when she was interviewed by presenter Jenni Murray on Woman's Hour (BBC Radio 4, 2001) about Black Women in Dance with then-managing director of ENB Christopher Nourse (2001–2003). Murray highlights an incident when Edwards felt awkward in a performance. She notes, "I remember you said at one point you were about to go out with the *corps de ballet* wearing pink and you cried". Edwards answers:

Yes, I did. I think a lot of it was nerves. Complete nerves, but at the same time it was quite an awesome experience. So, I think half of it was that feeling, Oh my god, I'm really alone and naked. But the flip side of the story was that [...] the artistic director at the time, Peter Schaufuss just ran up to me at the end and said "I didn't even notice that you looked odd as one black person in the *corps de ballet*". Because that was always the argument, oh if you have one black dancer in the *corps de ballet* she would spoil the eye line. And it was never the case.

However, I do think if you had [...] more female guest artists, they do exist in America. There are a pool of dancers. This was tried. Maybe if there was a more strategic way of just allowing any dancer, it's hard for a working class white person, it's hard for a black person to embrace classical dance, any kind of new forms. (Murray, 2001)

It is ironic that Edwards mentions that a black dancer and the aesthetic line in a corps ballet were viewed as not being a problem, since (as mentioned in Chapter Eight) Julie Felix was informed in 1977 by former artistic director ENB Beryl Grey (1968–1979) that she would not be employed, because the colour of her skin "would ruin the line-up of the swan, the *corps de ballet*" (Felix, 2015). This incident occurred nine years after Edwards was employed in 1986. The same year that Edwards was employed, Journalist David Dougill mentioned in his article Why black dancers fail at the barre (1986:44), that "it is claimed by quite serious ballet people that a single black swan or black *bayadère* in a white line-up would look ridiculous, and that a black dancer in a white company is easier to accept if he or she is of soloist rank". Although Edwards was speaking about this issue fifteen years after her appointment at ENB, Cassa Pancho, the artistic director of Ballet Black, mentions this matter on her website, stating that "Black dancers in the *corps de ballet* are not aesthetically pleasing" (Ballet Black, 2016). It is evident that there has always been a problem with black dancers in the *corps de ballet* of mainstream white companies in Britain, although Jaffray (2010) believes that:

Even within the Royal Ballet when I was there, you can't say that, [black people] won't ruin the symmetry of your ballet. But I think it has come on a bit, but partly because of the whole world of ballet training runs through these big societies, who have an idea of what ballet is going to be.

The interview continues and Murray questions, "But how much of that look is still in the minds of artistic directors?" Nourse replies:

I don't think it is at all. Well, it certainly isn't in the company that I represent. I can't speak for other companies. But I have to say that, from my own personal point of view I'm used to seeing dancers in America, across the world as well as in Britain. It never occurs to me to think about it. The same way when I see the theatre or I go to the opera. It just never occurs to me. (Murray, 2001)

Murray asks:

Just let me ask you this. I mean, isn't ballet different to some extent? I wonder how much of a problem the accepted symbolism is? I mean you have the ballet Swan Lake, one of the most famous ballets there is, where white equals good equals Odette and black equals Odile equals bad and that is part of the symbolism of the ballet. (Murray, 2001)

Nourse responds:

Well, we talk about the white act and the black acts but actually there are productions you know, where the so-called black acts, they don't have to be black. I honestly think that has passed. I really do not believe that any artistic director these days looks at a line of swans and thinks, "Oh, I can't have a black dancer". It simply doesn't happen. (Murray, 2001)

Murray asks Edwards "Could you see yourself cast as Odette?"

Edwards responds:

I'm not now because I'm kind of rushed. I think that anything is possible. [...] I think there has to be this dip. It mustn't be, sort of like be swept under the carpet. I think that there has been a lot of change. However, that change has to be completely strategic and powerful. (Murray, 2001)

Edwards' interview with Murray highlights the binary oppositions and symbolisms of black and white within the ballet institution, both on the stage as represented in character roles in the ballet Swan Lake, and the association of black female dancers performing amongst an all-white *corps de ballet*. Nourse seems oblivious to contentions of racial conflict within ballet institutions and tries to appear neutral and unbiased in the interview.

Another example of documented evidence of Edwards' experience with ENB was noted by journalist Sanjoy Roy (2013). Edwards describes working with the company:

"When I entered the dance profession", she remembers, "it felt incredibly vibrant and diverse. There were lots of professional black dancers doing jazz, African-Caribbean, contemporary – though not many in ballet. It was only when I joined the ballet company that I came up against the politics of being black. There was a lot of attention around me, and I wasn't used to that. But I was raised with a strong sense of who I am, and that helped me handle it."

Within the company, Edwards encountered a mix of both strong support – including from artistic director Peter Schaufuss – and considerable sniping. There were two black men already in the company but, then as now, the pressure on conformity of appearance is greater on women, and Edwards found constantly being an "issue" wearing. "People say it's not about colour, it's about how good you are. But I think as a black person you feel you have to be better just to be taken as equal."

(Edwards quoted in Roy, 2013)

Roy's interview about Edwards' experience with LFB implies that although she enjoyed performing ballet, she sometimes felt as though she was reminded of her colour in the working environment.

With reference to Patrick Lewis, the Royal Academy of Dance website notes that he has been a ballet faculty member and teacher for over 14 years. His biography states that he was a soloist with the LFB in 1986. He was also "commissioned by ENB to create the first of a number of ballets, the last of which was in 2002 at Sadler's Wells" (Royal Academy of Dance, 2016).

Without Bailey's account of Britain's first black dancers – Wallace, Edwards and Lewis – working in the LFB, the historical portrayal would be incomplete. The next section examines Bailey's own experiences as a ballet dancer.

9.5 Bailey's brief encounter with London City Ballet

Whilst Bailey was training at London School of Classical Dancer from 1982–1985, he met artistic director Harold King, who gave classes at the school as a token of appreciation for the rehearsal space the company sometimes used. Bailey (2010) recalls his experience with King and he was occasionally asked to perform roles in the *corps de ballet*:

London City Ballet, Harold King, were based at London Studio Centre after they left us [...]. Harold King, the director, became a good friend of mine. He used to give us rep class as a thank-you for letting their offices be there. He quite liked me as well, we got on very well. He used to say, "Eh Denzil, one of the lads are injured, could you come to Cheltenham for the week?" And I'd go and do Coppélia for the week. And of course who was there, Ben Love was in the company. He was in London City for about three years [...]. I've known Ben since I was in school. He was already dancing. He was in London City and then he was in Northern Ballet, so he was doing quite well as a dancer.

After graduating from the London School of Classical Dance, Bailey went to Norway for about eight months to perform in The Jazz Show, a cabaret in Norwegian. Once the contract had ended, he returned to England to look for work. Whilst looking for work he attended classes at various dance studios, like Pineapple and Dance Works in London, for about a year.

9.5.1 Bailey and the audition process with LFB (1988–1994)

Bailey describes events leading up to his employment with the company:

We were going to Germany to audition. Every German town has a company and everyone goes to Germany to auditions. There are about twenty-five auditions in a week, different companies. A friend of mine, a Chinese guy, said that he was going to audition for the Festival Ballet. I was like “What? Festival Ballet”, that’s the place to be for boys, big stars only [...] I went to Germany and did fifteen companies in fifteen days. I came back after fourteen auditions in fifteen days and nothing, nothing, nothing! Well, one or two maybes that fell through. Came back, my friend got into Festival Ballet. I hit the roof! I couldn’t believe it!

I bumped into this white guy who was in the company, who I became friends with in the class. He said, “Denzil, they’re looking for boys and doing a new production of Swan Lake [...]. You have very good technique, go up to the Festival Hall, go up to the fourth floor and say you want to speak to the ballet master and say you want to audition. And Schaufuss would like you anyway, he likes black guys”. Peter Schaufuss was a mega star. So I went up there and asked if I could do class tomorrow and they said “yes”. And when I went the next day, the company’s based by the Albert Hall, they used to do two long Festival Hall seasons. They did a month in the summer and a month for Christmas, The Nutcracker which went on for ever! Fifty, sixty shows of The Nutcracker. Two shows every day, you know, like a pantomime. So I went up there, it was Nutcracker season, no-one did class, because once you did Nutcracker season you just can’t be bothered to do class every day. You’re stuck in the theatre from 10 in the morning to 11 at night.

So when I went to class there was about eight boys in class and Schauf [Schaufuss] wasn’t there. So I thought, oh my god, I know him, he’s a star, [...] they were all big stars. Then Patrick Lewis, a black guy came in [...] I thought, [...] a black boy! I asked, “Is it OK if I stand next to you, mate?” He said, “You can stand where you bloody well like” and walked off. I couldn’t believe it. I did class and the ballet master was like, “You’re actually quite good. Come back tomorrow, Peter’s away today”. Did class next day, more boys. Boys fluctuated, sometimes there was loads, sometimes there was nobody. [...] A couple of guys said, “You’re actually quite good, you should come back tomorrow, they’d like you”. So went back next day, in the next day, they said, “quite good, come back tomorrow”. Went in the next day, “come back tomorrow”.

So this went on and I thought, what’s going on? This went on for about three weeks [...] Even then the company had finished the season and had a week’s holiday and went back to the other hall [...] So I didn’t go for a couple of days, I can’t deal with this. And then I went back, they said, “Oh you’re back, come back in tomorrow”. I said, “Please”. And one day he [Schaufuss], called me, he said, “You weren’t in class today”. I said, “Yeah, I had things to do today”. He said “If you’d come in today I would have given you a contract”. I said, “Really?” [...] Me and him used to laugh and joke every day, he was like a demi-god. He said, “If you haven’t got the time and dedication to do class everyday...”. I said, “Peter man, I just had things to do, I’ll be in tomorrow, don’t worry”. He said, “Come in tomorrow and get your contract”. (Bailey, 2010)

It is unfortunate that Bailey went through such a long gruelling ordeal to get a contract with the company. Was it standard practice to put dancers through such an extended period of training and audition before offering a contract? Did Bailey’s treatment have anything to do with his race? He also mentions his first encounter with Lewis at one of the classes, who

assumed Schaufuss was going to be friendly towards him because he was black. In this instance, whether dancers were black or white, when aiming for a place in the company, it seems that making friends was not part of the process.

9.5.2 Bailey's working experiences with LFB

Bailey briefly describes his working experience, emphasising some of the highlights and low moments of performing with the company:

I was always in the corps, but when they get their modern season, everyone auditions for a part and the choreographer sees who he likes. So I got to do a few more things. I had the main role in an all-boys ballet [...]. A ballet called Salome by Olga Roriz⁵² and she was a big contemporary woman in Gulbenkian [Ballet] and she had her own company in Lisbon. It was all this stuff on the floor [...] All the boys auditioned. She chose about three principals, two soloists and about two corps guys and I was one of the corps guys. We all had three days each to choreograph with her and it turned out that I had the longest solo. It was a fabulous, fabulous ballet. We even won the best modern ballet of the year in '93, my best year. My technique wasn't mega strong so I got pushed into the more modern-contemporary ballets. (Bailey, 2010)

Bailey recalls how working in the *corps de ballet* can sometimes involve minimal participation and therefore can become very tedious. He gives an example of a performance:

We had a big fallout with the boss Derek Dean and he gave me to do, one of the guards in Sleeping Beauty I was cast for. I don't know whether he did it or the choreographer did it. And I found out when I was doing the casting for the whole tour, I was doing this role every single show! You bitch and complain about it. I just had to stand there [...] You were either a guard or a trumpeter. I was also a trumpeter. Three of us were trumpeters every night, me, this Italian guy and this English guy. Now the English guy was very soft, "Well, if we have to do it, we just have to do it, you know what I mean". And the Italian guy said, "This fucking dance is shit!" And he'd be kicking chairs, "I didn't come here for this shit!" And I'd be there quietly fuming, "Don't fuck with me, I'm not in the mood". (Bailey, 2010)

It can be perceived from Bailey's account that Dean's attitude of annoyance towards him and his colleagues led the dancers to perform minor roles throughout the season of Sleeping Beauty, hence Dean exhibits control over his frustrations when given the boys these parts to perform (Lakes, 2005:23). Although Bailey mentioned that his technique was not strong enough for classical repertoire, his forte in modern contemporary ballets allowed him to take centre stage in Roriz's ballet.

⁵² Olga Roriz (1955–) is a Portuguese dancer and choreographer who joined Gulbenkian Ballet in 1976. In 1991 she "conceives The seven silences of Salome for a commission from ENB [and] wins the best choreography of the year prize from the London time Out Magazine" (Companhia Olga Roriz, 2016).

9.6 Darren Panton

After Panton left the Royal Ballet Upper School in 1989, he sought employment with mainstream British ballet companies like the BRB, previously known as The Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet until 1990, when it changed its name under director Peter Wright. He also approached Antony Dowell, the director at RBC, for work opportunities. Panton (2006) describes the process he undertook to present himself for employment and explains:

[I] wrote a letter to the Royal Ballet Company. Peter Wright, he was at Sadler's and Antony Dowell was Royal Ballet. I remembered when I was in the Upper School he wanted me in the company, so I thought, let me write him a letter and explain what I'd just done and audition or do a couple of classes. So I went up to Birmingham Royal Ballet for a couple of months, but there were no contracts. Antony Dowell called and wanted me come down to the Royal Ballet Company. So I was down there for a couple of months. I got called into the office and he basically he told me that I wasn't ready, I didn't have the body. I saw between the lines that he wasn't looking for a black dancer in 1989.

It is regrettable that Panton was not offered employment at the RBC. Since Dowell had mentioned that his body was not suitable for the company, it was ironic to note that Panton studied for seven years with the same ballet institution that measures the potential dancers' bodies for aptness before accepting them into the school, as described in Chapter Eight. Had Dowell digressed to Eurocentric stereotypes of the black body's suitability for performing ballet, as discussed in Chapter Four?

As stated in Chapter Seven, Jaffray said that Panton was a great dancer and should have been in the RBC. She explains where the relationship may have gone wrong:

Now Darren, was a talented enough to go into the Royal Ballet, but was his personality, right? Whether it was a result of his treatment in the school or whether it's part of him I don't know. To be honest a lot of people have talent to be ballet dancers, but not the right attitude or the right personality. [...] I question whether Darren had the right personality, but talent yes, he should have been in the Royal Ballet.

(Jaffray, 2010)

The RBC integrated black dancers in a performance of The Nutcracker that cast two black principal dancers Christina Johnson and Ronald Perry from the Dance Theatre of Harlem in 1991 (as mentioned in Chapter Eight) and Williams became the first black British dancer to be employed with BRB the same year. Panton (2006) offers his perceptions on how the RBC began to integrate black dancers in the company:

How they got round it was to take on black dancers from Harlem. People saw my potential and knew I was able to do the work. They knew it was all political and colour.

They employed [Jerry] Douglas because he was from America. Then they employed the Cubans, but not the black British because they always see that there is no talent here.

From Panton's perspective, the integration of black dancers in British ballet companies were sourced outside the UK. Nevertheless, there were talented black British dancers during the 80s and 90s who trained with reputable ballet and dance institutions, such as Williams, Mark Elie (2011), Adesola Akinleye (2013), amongst others not mentioned, stated during interviews for this thesis that they were discriminated against during auditions and did not gain employment with British Ballet companies. Therefore, many black British dancers went abroad to other countries and trained or worked with the DTH, as documented in Khan's 1976 report (Khan, 1976:105), For future research, it would be significant to investigate whether black British dancers are still going abroad to work with international ballet companies to evaluate whether the situation has changed.

9.7 Jerry Douglas (RBC 1997–2000)

An example of the first black dancer to be employed with the RBC was African American Jerry Douglas (1980–) a dancer from Sacramento, California. He came to England to train at the RBS at the age of 15 in 1995 and two years later he was chosen to join the RBC, becoming its first black dancer. He said in an interview with The Voice newspaper, "This is one of the biggest and best ballets in the world. I am delighted to be a part of it. [...] People might see me as something of a pioneer but you do have to work hard to get here" (The Voice (no author), 1997:3). Douglas left the RBC in 2000 to join the American Ballet Theatre. It could be argued that the public nature of Douglas's employment was an achievement for the company in their quest to appear integrated and diverse. Nevertheless, black British dancers like Panton who trained at the RBS, and were available for work before Douglas joined, were not given the chance to be employed with the company. Was there truly a lack of black British talent at the time of Douglas's employment?

As mentioned in Chapter Seven, former Royal Ballet dancer Matthew Paluch shared his experience of training and working with Douglas and provides a different insight on the African American dancer:

The guy that joined my year at school (Jerry Douglas) was [one of] the most gifted dancers of his generation. He was unbelievable! And it was a very political year, because they couldn't deny his capability, aesthetically and technically. But he was black and he was very dark-skinned, and the Royal Ballet had never had a black dancer before, and he was the first ever to get into the Royal Ballet. He was there for two years. When the company travelled outside of London on national tours he was massively featured. When they performed at the Opera House, he either had something on his head or he had a wig or facial hair on. The black person became invisible – this was 1997. He only lasted two years because it just wasn't happening for him.

And then he went to American Ballet Theatre and he danced there for three years and it wasn't happening there, so he gave up. When he graduated school he had a contract with the Royal Ballet, with Birmingham Royal Ballet, San Francisco and with American Ballet Theatre. They are four of the [...] biggest, most recognisable ballet companies in the world! You know, he was unbelievable! Well, the Royal Ballet, [...] wasn't ready for [him], but they couldn't not do it, because it would have been [a] huge political thing if he hadn't got the job, I think, or it could have been. He was an incredibly intelligent person and he realised that it wasn't going to happen and he didn't have time to waste because it's a short career. (Paluch, 2014)

Paluch's view of Douglas provides insight into his abundance of talent that was exploited by the RBC when he performed outside of London, as though the company were highlighting its cultural diversity through key roles and performances. On the other hand, whilst performing at London venues, his face was concealed with masks and costumes, as though his presence was not appreciated on stage. Chapter Eight, Panton also mentioned wearing costumes and head-wear in RBS productions. Did other black dancers have a similar experience of having their faces covered in performances? Why did ballet institutions want to hide the racial identity of these black dancers? This will be evaluated in the conclusion.

It could be argued that Douglas was exploited by the RBC who were not able to get past the colour of his skin, instead of treating him like the talented dancer he was trained to be. It may be assumed that the ABT did not know how to appreciate his artistic talents either, because according to Paluch, Douglas had a short career there, too.

9.8 Panton at the London City Ballet (1992–1996)

After Panton's brief work experience with BRB and the RBC, he joined London City Ballet (LCB). He shares some of his memories: "They gave me proper roles and solo roles. There were already two black guys there. The director was from South Africa" (Panton, 2006).

Whilst Panton danced solo roles in LCB he was also in the *corps de ballet*. He remembers performing in British dancer and choreographer Jack Carter's⁵³ (1917–1998) production of The Witch Boy (1956). This ballet is "based on the American folk-tale of Barbara Allen, it tells how young Barbara falls in love with the Witchboy creature who is lynched by the small-minded Smokey Mountains community [...] a sting in the tail when Witch Boy is brought back to life" (Jordan, 1992). When Panton (2006) performed in this ballet in 1992, he describes the role he is cast to perform:

The only role we could do was a bit at the end. Jack Carter, that's the choreographer. The ballet was called The Witch Boy, it's about this odd boy in the town. It's about a child who's supposed to be based around discrimination. In a way he was trying to make it like that, but I'm not sure where he's coming at? It's very hillbilly acts and scenes. He goes mad and the villagers kill him or something like that. Then someone has to stand in to hang for him. You know what I'm going to say. The hanging corpse [...] was the only role he'd give me or Simon. We had a hood on our head and a rope. And I swear to this day if you call up Simon Smith, he'd tell you the same story. I was there for four years, but when you get comfortable, £500 per week in your bank account, you can't complain.

Considering Panton's account of performing the role of a corpse, it is clear that he felt some animosity towards the part as a black man, because although the witch boy is assumed to be white, the story is similar to that of many African American men from around 1880, particularly in the southern states of America. The history of lynching continued were punished for accusation of merely looking at a white woman were allowed as late as 1968, this was discussed in Chapter Five. Historian Junius Rodriguez (2007:348) explains that "lynching is a violent crime in which one or more persons are apprehended by a mob and then tortured or executed, often by hanging. The act is often justified by its perpetrators as vigilante justice. [...] Lynching became symbolic of white economic, political, and social

⁵³ Jack Carter (1917–1998) trained at the Sadler's Wells School and danced with many companies such as Ballet Guild, Molly Lake's Continental Ballet, Original Ballet Russe, Ballet Rambert, and London Festival Ballet (Craine and Mackrell, 2010:89). He choreographed many works but was most notable for his success with The Witch Boy, which opened up opportunities for him to work "with companies all over the world" (Meisner, 1999).

frustration directed towards African Americans". Although Panton lists performances in many ballets with LCB on his curriculum vitae, such as Nutcracker, Romeo & Juliet, Giselle, Les Patineurs, Coppelia and Swan Lake (Panton, 2006) to name a few, it is unfortunate that his experience of performing in The Witch Boy has remained a haunting memory.

9.9 Shevelle Dynott, English National Ballet (2005–present)

Dynott joined English National Ballet⁵⁴ after graduating from the RBS in 2005. He describes his first working memories with the company:

My first professional ballet contract was with English National Ballet in 2005. I perform *corps de ballet* work. I've performed the Mock Turtle in Alice in Wonderland that was a little solo. I performed Puss-in-boots and Sleeping Beauty, other than that I haven't really done anything. I'd really like to perform another role. I'd like to perform loads of roles [...] I always thought do something on your merits [...] And you work really hard in the big wide world. My first few years at English National Ballet, I was like this, pushing, pushing, pushing and never got anywhere. I even saw myself getting a bit less casual. You know like, this person's not doing every class and he's learning more than what I'm learning sometimes. And that used to get to me quite a bit and I was like, what am I doing? I went up to the director's office and he's like "the staff think, there's blar, blar, blar blar" [...] nothing ever got done. On that note there's loads of roles that I really want to do.

At the English National Ballet we do a lot of shows, but when you do the corps, you do the same thing, day in day out, well, I do [...] People used to say, "Shev, why don't you go to America to dance?" I say, I'm a black British dancer, I want to do something over here, everyone goes over to America. (Dynott, 2010)

The roles that Dynott performed were anthropomorphised character roles that masked his face – this is similar to what Panton and Douglas experienced whilst working with British ballet companies. Was it a trend to hide dark-skinned dancers on stage? What was the motivation of the artistic directors for these castings? Dynott was lucky to get work with a mainstream British ballet company after graduating, though his experience in the *corps de ballet* has not led to more performance opportunities or moving up within the company. He

⁵⁴ Succeeding Peter Schaufuss as artistic director, in 1990 Hungarian ballet dancer Ivan Nagy (1943–2014) was employed by the English National Ballet, followed by British dancer Derek Deane in 1993 until 2001. Deane was described as "focused on drilling the dancers and programming blockbusters and safe bets, which put the finances back on track. But many dancers left, and critics accused him of dumbing down. He quit in 2001" (Roy, 2009). Swedish dancer and teacher Matz Skoog became director from 2001–2005; Canadian ballet dancer Wayne Eagling served in this position from 2006 to 2012, and finally Spanish principal dancer Tamara Rojo is the present artistic director. Rojo studied in Madrid and joined Ballet Victor Ullate. In 1996, she worked with the Scottish Ballet, then moved to ENB the following year, becoming a principal dancer. She also became a principal dancer with the RBC in 2000 before leaving to become the ENB's artistic director in 2012 (ROH, 2016). She has established new works during her appointment, working with artists such as British-born classical Indian dancer Akram Khan, who created a new version of Giselle for ENB in 2016 (Akram Khan Company, 2016).

mentions opportunities to go to America for work as many black British dancers have gone before, especially to join the Dance Theatre of Harlem, and to perform more diverse roles. Yet his decision to stay in Britain with the hope of moving up within the company can be perceived as optimistic. Dynott (2010) describes another experience of performing in the *corps de ballet* when he danced in Strictly Gershwin in 2008:

Derek Dean is very old school, he created a new ballet, Strictly Gershwin, and he said, "Oh Shevelle, we don't need you at the rehearsal at the moment". I said, "OK then". He said, "You're going to be the French policeman in this ballet". I was like, "Oh cool". I was like, "Am I going to stand out?" He said, "Yes, you're going to stand out, definitely". I rode a bike around the whole Albert Hall, right round and going down the middle and one guy refused to do this bit, because he had a sore back. All I was going to do was march down some stairs. That's all I was going to do for this tour or for that whole season. It's a shame the guy hurt his back, but if it wasn't for him I wouldn't have done the classical number at the end, which was really classical and which I really enjoyed. And I showed them that I could do it.

Dynott, once again, gets a small opportunity to stand out from the *corps de ballet* in his policeman role. He becomes frustrated with his minor roles in the *corps de ballet*.

Nevertheless, he was encouraged when he received a letter from Debretts congratulating him on his achievements of working with ENB and telling him that they wanted to include him in a book. Whilst he hadn't performed any major roles with ENB, he felt that

career-wise [...] I want to have at least done a role like, you know where a critic saying that "Shevelle Dynott was really good in this" or whatever [...] That person must have seen me in that Garland dance or something amongst everyone. Yes, I stand out, definitely. It was really weird [...] Did they get this name right? Is this actually me? Am I going to be in this book? It's really, really weird, but I haven't achieved what I really want yet? Is it going to happen? (Dynott, 2010)

Dynott's achievement of being employed with the company and being mentioned by Debretts had spurred his confidence. His major debut role came in 2013 when he was cast in the role of the Moor in Petrushka. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Sawyers and Williams also made their debut in this production. Why are black male dancers always cast in this role? The character role is a Moor, so does a colour casting therefore make sense? Whether or not Dynott was typecast or colour cast for the part, historically dancers from the ENB like Williams (a black British dancer) (1991) and Antonucci (a white dancer) (2008) were blacked up for the role, and Dynott escaped this misfortune. Dance critic Jann Parry noted the colour-casting of this character and commented on stereotyping roles:

[...] the Moor [is] an exotic savage with a scimitar. So is it acceptable to cast a dark-skinned dancer (Shevelle Dynott on Thursday night) as the Moor instead of blacking-up a white performer? No worse, I guess, than asking an intelligent female dancer (Nancy

Osboldston) to be a witless doll or a talented male dancer (Fabian Reimair) to lose control over his limbs. (Parry, 2013)

Although Parry refers to other stereotypes and gender associations regarding the other characters, why did she mention Dynott's skin tone? Would Parry have critiqued Dynott if he was a white dancer who blacked-up? Maybe she could have commented on the racial stereotype of the role itself. Dynott has waited eight years to perform in a major role with the company, even though it could be argued that he was colour cast. Will potential roles for Dynott be more diverse in his future with the company?

9.10 Chantelle Gotobed

Gotobed graduated from RBC in 2004 and went on to audition for companies to find employment. She describes one audition, which became a cultural awakening of her racial identity:

When I went to Europe [...] I got invited to audition and you send your photographs and everything, as you do. And I had a black-and-white portfolio. And I had a profile picture. I had other pictures [...]. So I auditioned for the company and the director came up to me after and was like, "Oh, you look very different from your photograph, completely different". He kept looking at it. Obviously I looked a lot lighter in my black-and-white photo [...] He's like, "You look completely different". I said, "Yeah I am, this is me".

That's my least enjoyable audition and it was an eye opener to what's going on out there. I don't think I was fully aware of it and that's when it really hit home. I thought, oh gosh, this profession is much harder than I thought it was. Ballet is hard for anyone, white, black, whatever, anyone. And for girls there is so much competition. So you know you have to be good and being good isn't enough really. You really have to have the look as well. I was the only person of colour at the audition. That was quite tough. I thought, this is how the world is, I can't change it, but I can try and make a difference [if I] keep going. It's no point getting bitter about things because that just holds you back. Everyone has an opinion and not everyone [is] going to agree with you. Hopefully their opinions will change over time. But, I'm going to battle through. It made me toughen up a bit, I was very young. A little bit naive in a sense for not realising. But my training and everything didn't have an exposure to that. I was 18. (Gotobed, 2010)

Although Gotobed is of mixed-race parentage – her mother is Jamaican British and her father is English (as mentioned in Chapter Eight) – she is light-skinned, and was not offered the job. Only the artistic director knows why Gotobed was not employed, yet it could be argued that there was an element of racial discrimination in this case, with reference to his comment about the photograph, and because he did not make any comments about her talent. Many black dancers refer to their negative audition experiences as having had racial discrimination undertones. Comments like, "You know I didn't get the job because I was

black” became a familiar phrase and a way of knowing and acknowledging that potentially, in most of the jobs they auditioned for, they were rejected based on the colour of their skin. Although equal opportunity policies are in effect in all organisations by law, covert discrimination persists (Equal Opportunities polices, 2016). The black other dancers interviewed for this thesis have conveyed that they are accustomed to being rejected at auditions based on off-hand implied racial discrimination comments. Sometimes this has caused traumatic emotional experiences for many dancers and has led to some giving up the ballet profession completely or working in another dance genre like contemporary or musical theatre. For example, Williams left BRB and went to work with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Edwards left ENB to join London Contemporary Dance Theatre.

9.10.1 Gotobed and the Northern Ballet (2007–2008)

Gotobed’s first job was with Ballet Black, but they didn’t have any contracts at the time so she auditioned for Northern Ballet and was successful in joining the company. She recollects working with the company:

It was a very strange time that I had there. It was a good experience, definitely without a doubt, I learnt so much from it. But the repertoire was completely different from what I thought it would be. I didn’t really dance that much that year. There was quite a lot of acting involved, a lot of acting roles which I did. It is theatre, I mean Northern Ballet Theatre, there is the theatrical element to it. I didn’t really dance. I thought there would be a bit more ballet. And I’m a ballet girl at heart, I love my [Frederick] Ashtons, I love my [Kenneth] MacMillans and even the Wayne McGregors’ dancing and I just didn’t really get that there. It was a lot of traveling, it was a touring company. They toured England quite a lot. There were two other girls of colour as well, there was Amy Johnson from America and Sarah Cunningham, we were all the same year actually. And Amy is now not dancing any more. Everyone, sort of left, it just wasn’t the company for me. (Gotobed, 2010)

Gotobed’s work experience with the NB involved many acting roles rather than dance performances, meaning that a lot less dancing skill was required. The NB was emphasising “classical dance dramas” under former artistic director Gable’s influence from 1987–1998 (Northern Ballet, 2016 online). It can be perceived from the interview that Gotobed wanted to perform more classical ballet repertoire which she did not achieve whilst she was performing with the company, because company’s style was more ‘dance drama’, consequently a year later she left and re-joined Ballet Black.

9.11 Ballet Black

Inspired by the founding of DTH, which was partly created in response to the lack of opportunities for African American dancers in mainstream ballet companies, Cassa Pancho (1978–) established Ballet Black (BB) in 2001 to generate openings for black and Asian dancers. Pancho is of Trinidadian and British parentage and started dancing at age two and a half, eventually she trained at the Royal Academy of Dance. She has a degree from Durham University and wrote her thesis on the lack of black women in British ballet entitled All Things Black and Beautiful (Ballet Black, FOQ, 2016). In an online interview with Fabcat (2012) notes the problems she had finding black women to interview:

“I discovered there were none at all to even interview. That’s why when I graduated, I thought I’d start something and see what happens.” Asked whether her tutors were encouraging of her dissertation subject, she replies with a shaky laugh: “Ummm...not hugely! 10,000 words on something no-one wants you to write about is quite tricky. We had a few different tutors and there was definitely a feeling from some that the lack of black women in ballet was because their body shapes were completely wrong – which I found was not at all the case, just a stereotype that’s hung over from decades ago.

Pancho also found, through her research, that the lack of role models has prevented many black girls looking to dance as a career. “If there are no black teachers, you won’t get as many black students. There needs to be people they can look up to and aspire to be like.”

Though Pancho does not have any work experience with a mainstream ballet company, she was inspired to create her own successful company, partly based on her dissertation research. The company’s mission states:

Ballet Black is a professional ballet company for international dancers of black and Asian descent. We aim to bring ballet to a more culturally diverse audience by celebrating black and Asian dancers in ballet. We perform and offer community driven classes for dancers and students, young and old. Our ultimate goal is to see a fundamental change in the number of black and Asian dancers in mainstream ballet companies, making Ballet Black wonderfully unnecessary. (Ballet Black, 2016)

In 2003 BB met with former Royal Ballet principal dancer Debra Bull, former Creative Director for Royal Opera House 2 (ROH2). Bull offered the company rehearsal, training and performance space at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where the Royal Ballet Company are also based (Ballet Black, 2016). Journalist and Arts Editor David Lister (2014) recently expressed concerns about the very idea of Ballet Black, a company established because of the lack of opportunities for black and Asian dancers and based in the same building as the RBC – one of the major mainstream companies these dancers should be performing with:

They are good, so good that I want to pay them the ultimate and richly deserved accolade – they should be abolished. For I have to pinch myself when I see the Royal Opera House is hosting several nights devoted to a company purely for artists from certain ethnic minorities. Why? If companies such as the Royal Ballet, which is in the same building, are not recruiting sufficient black or Asian dancers, and [are] ignoring their talent, then we need to know about it.

The solution is to hold those national companies to account, not to go off and form a separate and separatist outfit, however brilliant. The arts have to be totally inclusive, or they are worthless. I took a look at Ballet Black's statement of intent on the company's own website. It says: "Our ultimate goal is to see a fundamental change in the number of black and Asian dancers in mainstream ballet companies, making Ballet Black wonderfully unnecessary."

Well, I'd say that after the reviews that this week's performances achieved, it already is wonderfully unnecessary. If there is evidence that the big companies really are not recruiting talented black and Asian dancers, then it is imperative that we are given the evidence, and that the heads of these mainstream, and indeed national, companies are forced to explain themselves in public. The danger is that Ballet Black, understandably delighted with public and critical reaction, will strive less to make themselves unnecessary.

It's a temptation that has to be resisted, because the existence of companies such as Ballet Black perpetuate a belief that we can categorise the arts by skin colour. That is as shocking as it sounds, yet what is Ballet Black doing if not exactly that?

That people can wander past the Royal Opera House in 2014 and say, "Oh look, there's a performance tonight by a company just for black people" is depressing. The dancers and choreographers of the acclaimed Ballet Black should be in the Royal Ballet, English National Ballet, Northern Ballet and the many other dance companies in the UK, classical and contemporary. Ballet Black makes no more sense to me than Opera Black or Film Black or Stand-up Black. In virtually every art form there have historically been difficulties for black and Asian artists in entering the mainstream. And it has been shameful. But, as the gradual success of colour-blind casting in mainstream theatre demonstrates, these difficulties can be addressed, not by forming distinct ethnic minority outfits, but by publicly challenging and even shaming the mainstream into recognising that talent has no ethnic boundaries. Cultural separatism, surely, has to be a thing of the past.

Lister's piece highlights the fact that Ballet Black represents itself as a separate/alternate ballet company because of the lack of access for black dancers to mainstream British companies. He has also written on a wide range of topics on representation in the arts, including blacking-up in opera (Lister, 1997; Lister, 2012). In addition to Lister's opinion of the company, Jaffray also shared her perceptions of BB:

I can understand Dance Theatre of Harlem set up in a particular place, but if we need to set up a black ballet company, what's that saying? Why is there a need? To me it's a real worry. I think Deborah Bull would say, "They're not yet at a standard to get into the Royal Ballet, so let's find a way to get them in a secure environment to get experience so maybe they get into another ballet company and then the Royal Ballet or maybe another ballet company or something". Quite depressing really, because how far do they have to go? (Jaffray, 2010)

Jaffray deliberates whether Ballet Black serves as a route for black British dancers to eventually enter mainstream ballet companies rather than audition directly. An example of this scenario is the employment of former Ballet Black dancer, British-Asian Sarah Kundi, who trained at the Central School of Ballet then worked for Northern Ballet from 2004–2008. She then worked with Ballet Black from 2008–2013 before joining the English National Ballet in 2014 as an Artist of the Company (English National Ballet, 2016).

Currently the company employs eight dancers, of which three are black British: Jacob Wye, Senior Artist, who trained on the Chance to Dance scheme and went on to the RBS, then to the Central School of Ballet; British Trinidadian Kanika Carr, also a Senior Artist, who trained at Central School of Ballet; and Joshua Harriette, First Year Apprentice and of British and Dominican parents, who studied at Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance. The five non-British members include Brazilian Isabela Coracy, Senior Artist; Japanese Sayaka Ichikawa, Senior Artist; African American Damien Johnson, Senior Artist; South African Mthuthuzeli November, First Year Apprentice; and African American Cira Robinsion, Senior Artist (Ballet Black, 2016). Pancho explains the challenges of finding black dancers for her company in an interview with journalist Hannah Pool:

In the early days, due to the lack of classically trained black ballet dancers in the UK, the company took dancers with a more contemporary background, which left them open to criticism. "We weren't able to hold ourselves to the standard of companies like the Royal Ballet," Pancho says, "so people probably made comments about the level of technique. And we didn't always go for a stick-thin look, so I'm sure that's been mentioned." (Pool, 2010)

In 2004 the company achieved Registered Charity Status and Thandie Newton is currently their Patron. BB have commissioned several choreographers to create works for the company, such as, Stephen Sheriff and Patrick Lewis (2002); Antonia Franceschi, Stephen Sheriff and Irek Mukhamedov (2005); Liam Scarlett, Antonia Franceschi, Bawren Tavaziva, and Company Ballet Master Raymond Chai (2007) to name but a few, and has won numerous dance awards (Ballet Black, 2016).

Former dancers who have worked with the company and who were interviewed for this research are: Denzil Bailey, who was a founder member and ballet master with BB (2001–2005); Florence Kollie (1984–) who worked with the company from 2001–2006; Shevelle

Dynott, who briefly worked with BB before working with ENB in 2005; and Chantelle Gotobed, who worked with BB from 2008–2011. Due to the constraints of this research, documentation of their experience with the company will be presented in a future study.

9.12 Conclusion

Many of the founders of British ballet companies, like Markova and Dolin, have either trained at the same institutions or worked in similar companies before establishing their own, creating an interwoven network of known artists. The black ballet dancers reviewed in this chapter were given the opportunity to work with some of the most renowned mainstream British companies in the world. They also developed small networks: because there are so few black dancers in this industry, many ballet dancers know each other through working in companies at the same time, such as Love and Bailey at LCB in the early 1980s, Love and Panton, also at LCB (1996) and Lewis and Bailey in the late 1980s. However, some black British dancers are not aware of one another due to the small network size. Whilst many have performed roles in the *corps de ballet*, movement up through the ranks within a company does not often occur, as experienced by Williams, Bailey, Dynott and Gotobed. According to the former principal dancer of the Royal Ballet, Carlos Acosta: “In most companies, when a talented black dancer is chosen as a member, they don’t know how to cast them properly. Still there is this mentality, especially with directors, that a black ballerina in the middle of a flock of white swans would somehow alter harmony” (Marsh and Goldhill, 2012). Casting can be a problem as male dancers seem to have had more opportunities to perform major roles, as did Love and Panton, or they performed in modern ballets, as Bailey did. While female dancers were more difficult to locate for interviews, it can still be assumed that there is a lack of opportunities for them in ballet companies due to directors not knowing what roles to cast them as mentioned above by Acosta, experienced by Felix (2015) and written by dance critic Dougill (1984) in Chapter Four. Black female dancers were also colour cast as experienced by African American Collins, who performed the main roles of Carmen and Aida as mentioned in Chapter Four.

Some male dancers were colour cast, as experienced by Williams and Dynott in their performance of Petrushka. Journalists Sarah Marsh and Olivia Goldhill (2012) reported on the employment of black dancers in mainstream ballet companies and found:

While most companies will hire a non-white dancer, there are very few that will employ more than a handful. Christopher McDaniel, a dancer at Los Angeles Ballet, believes unofficial quotas affect job offers. "I've done a few auditions, and companies are initially interested because they needed one or two black dancers in the company. But once the spots get filled, the attention is no longer there. I have felt that some companies will accept you because they need one black dancer to look better in the public eye." For dancers in traditional companies, casting opportunities are often limited. "I'm lucky to have directors who cast me on ability," says McDaniel. "But a lot of black men are cast in full-mask roles, like the Mouse King or the wolf in Sleeping Beauty."

McDaniel's experience highlights how it is more frequent for black male dancers to perform roles wearing masked costumes as mentioned earlier by Panton, Douglas and Dynott. Were the male dancers discussed in this chapter (Williams, Bailey, Panton, Love and Dynott) fulfilling an unofficial quota, as suggested by McDaniel? It can be argued that most black British dancers mentioned in this chapter were not given the opportunity to perform major roles or develop their repertoire experience, and therefore many left the ballet industry and joined other dance genres such as musical theatre or contemporary companies like Ballet Rambert Company or London Contemporary Dance which Edwards joined after leaving the ENB. Literary scholar Alison Donnell notes an influx of black dancers into these companies: "After the development in the mid-1960s of contemporary dance, inspired by American dance pioneer Martha Graham, black dancers began to be employed by mainstream contemporary dance companies, such as Rambert Dance Company and London Contemporary Dance Theatre" (Donnell, 2001:89). Considering Donnell's comments, are black dancers still moving into contemporary dance companies today? By observing the numbers of black British dancers in the four mainstream ballet companies today which total five, as mentioned in the key introduction, it can be assumed that the black dancers are still entering contemporary dance companies, for example Rambert has 22 dancers in the company and 7 are black or mixed race. Two dancers are from Cuba, Miguel Altunaga and Carolyn Bolton was born in Columbia, but trained in South Carolina, USA, whilst five dancers are black British, Liam Francis, Sharia Johnson, Jacob O'Connell, Stephen Quildan and Kym

Sojourna (Rambert, 2017 online), therefore they illustrate a substantial representation of black British dancers in a contemporary dance company.

Black British dancers who wanted to remain in the ballet profession also joined Ballet Black in London, auditioned for international companies in Europe or joined DTH for more dance opportunities. It could be argued that ballet should represent the multi-cultural diversity of British society as modern contemporary companies do, though until artistic directors of mainstream ballet companies cast black dancers in major parts instead of retaining them at ground level for the sake of racial representation, it will not be enough to encourage future generations, since role models like Acosta have now left the stage for retirement from the RBC. Whilst other black male dancers in mainstream ballet companies are rising throughout the ranks slowly, the representation of black female dancers needs to be encouraged by artistic casting those talent dancers in the roles that they deserve rather than aesthetic representation for example Collins experienced in Chapter Four. Who are the future black British role models?

CONCLUSION

The main themes of race, representation and aesthetics, as they relate to black dancers in British ballet, were explored through a multitude of topics that overlap in each chapter. One of the key objectives of this thesis was to provide a historical analysis of both European and black people from the African diaspora in ballet. To support these themes, ethnographic and socio-historical references to dance focusing on gender, the dancing bodies of 'white' and 'black' people, post-colonial discourse, racism, and institutional racism were analysed. The theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995:2) helped to construct an analysis of these topics through cultural studies and sociology. Examples of key scholars discussed include Pierre Bourdieu ([1986] 2011), Stuart Hall (1997), Richard Dyer (1997), Paul Gilroy (1995), Paul Willis (1996) and Lola Young (1995).

An overview of the chapters highlights the key reasons black dancers are underrepresented in ballet in the UK. Chapter One, 'Ballet roots and ballet bodies', explored non-European dance forms with reference to Indian dance, which has been documented as one of the earliest dance forms, as well as to ancient Egypt in Northern Africa. Both were investigated to identify their influence on European ballet. The concept of classical dance was also investigated to ascertain how Indian dance was defined as classical, whilst ancient Egyptian dance was described by dance scholars using classical terminology, therefore highlighting different concepts of the term 'classical' within dance forms. The term 'aesthetic' was also explored to evaluate whether ancient Egyptian aesthetic concepts are connected to ballet's artistic influences. Similarities were revealed in the concepts of beauty in Greek and Roman sculpture and references to Egyptian, Greek and Roman gods. These ideas led to evaluating whether there was an aesthetic connection between Egyptian and Greek cultures, as some dance scholars locate ballet's origins in Greece. As mentioned above, some connections were found, but this area requires further research and perhaps even another thesis. The examples provide a starting point for possible non-European and non-white connections in ballet's history. 'Whiteness' in the ballet industry was explored with reference to the ballet repertoire, godliness and the aesthetic perceptions of beauty. Analysing the idea of

whiteness in ballet is important to establish whether Eurocentric ideologies still contribute to current artistic directors' decisions when auditioning black dancers for traditional ballet repertoire, thus highlighting the effects of institutional racism in the profession.

The second part of the chapter examined male and female ballet dancers whose bodies help shape the aesthetic ideals of the ballet body. This section first investigated how gender roles in ballet were defined, then goes on to explore how the male dancer was at one stage subordinate to female roles, due in part to the opinions of critics like Théophile Gautier, Jules Janin and André Levinson. Male dancers were discussed with reference to their height and the roles they performed in ballet repertoire, using key dancers as examples. Sergei Diaghilev eroticised the male dancer through Vaslav Nijinsky, and over time this representation has been kept alive in media representations of the Cuban guest artist of the Royal Ballet, Carlos Acosta. It is important to note that both dancers were also racialised. The representation of the female ballet dancer in Britain provided an example of how ballet was once perceived as a low art form, where men lusted over women in the dance halls. However, the founder of the Royal Ballet Ninette de Valois re-established ballet's profile by programming prevalent classical repertoire like Giselle, which emphasised the grace, 'purity' and 'virginity' of the female dancer, and propelled the art form to a higher status. A brief overview of popular female ballet dancers from the Romantic era onwards provided examples of how they were described with reference to their grace and body movement. Prima ballerinas that had fundamental qualities such as flexibility and technique were ultimately successful because of their grace and lyrical qualities. Two aspects of George Balanchine's requirements for the female body were explored: in one instance, they were inspired by the Russian dancer Elizaveta Gerdz, whom he met whilst training, and in another, he was inspired by the African American Josephine Baker with her short torso and long legs. Ballet's roots and the ballet body are central foundations of this thesis, and it was important to unravel these as central concepts of the art form in relation to Africanist connections.

Chapter Two, 'Perceptions of black bodies', exemplified how the black body was categorised and racially discriminated against from the late seventeenth century onwards. This chapter

takes on evolutionary theorists such as Sir William Lawrence (Lawrence, [1819] 1984:170-171), who created a hierarchy of race based on skin colour, where dark skin was inferior and white skinned people were superior. These racist ideologies are still present in society today, as illustrated throughout this thesis through representations of black dancers in ballet. The issue of black people being referred to as 'ugly' was also examined through an evaluation of these concepts. If black people were historically perceived as ugly, then how were they going to be represented on the stage when compared to the white, virginal ballet dancers? The sexualisation of the black body was also explored with reference to how the black male was perceived as over-sexed and over-endowed, leading to an exploration of whether these representations are still current when black men are cast in ballet repertoire. The black female body has also historically been stereotyped as overly sexual, and there was a perception that black women had large bottoms. This was demonstrated in the example of Saartje (or Sarah) Baartman (Holmes, 2007:2), who was exhibited in London and Paris, and whose sexual organs were dissected for analysis. Stereotypes about the anatomy of black dancers led to perceptions that their bodies were unsuitable to performing ballet, as explored in Chapter Four. To conclude this chapter, early dance writers were evaluated using critical discourse analysis to see whether they contributed to negative representations of black dancers, particularly in documentations of 'primitive' dance. Examples of authors such as Ethel Urlin (Kassing, 2007:36) and Curt Sachs (Youngerman, 1974:6) demonstrated that their ideologies were founded on evolutionist theories of the time, therefore perpetuating negative racist stereotypes. It was important to highlight the early Eurocentric perceptions of the black body to evaluate where current beliefs about the black dancing body originated and how they contributed to institutionalised racist interpretations, with reference to the dance industry.

Research also revealed that black people were associated with 'primitive' ideals, and this idea was further explored in Chapter Three, 'Primitive: Its associations with African American dance and its influence on American dance culture'. By investigating how primitive dance was associated with black dancers and their dance forms since the 1930s, various ideas emerged. For example, African American concert dancers created adaptations of traditional

African dance forms, which were considered primitive dances. Since that time, black professional dancers were stereotyped as being suited only to performing these dance styles, and this point becomes even more evident throughout the thesis. Adaptations of traditional dance forms, also known as primitive dance, were not fully appreciated or taken seriously as an art form by most American dance scholars, or even by African American philosopher Alain Locke, until African American dance anthropologists such as Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus established and popularised these dances based on their research in Africa and the Caribbean. Their stage adaptations were acknowledged by the dance world. African Americans were stereotyped as suitable only for performing these dance styles by critics like John Martin and Arnold Haskell, whilst white American dance pioneers were acknowledged for creating masterpieces from themes on the primitive, like Martha Graham in modern dance and principal ballet dancer Vaslav Nijinsky. Primitivism became fashionable amongst artists like Pablo Picasso and Paul Gauguin, and the western world prospered from appropriating the ideas of 'primitive nature and nurture'. It was important to investigate how perceptions of 'primitive' dance were used creatively by African Americans and white American dance pioneers, to establish how the power of interpretation was culturally utilised.

Chapter Four, 'Dance critics on black dancers in ballet', moved on to explore the early representations of black dancers in ballet as documented by American and English dance critics, and dance writers working from the 1930s onwards, such as Martin, Haskell and Stodelle. The literature researched for this chapter highlighted public perceptions through these writings about black dancers on stage during the era of segregation in the United States. The chapter also explored the establishment of various all-black ballet companies like Dunham's Ballet Nègre and the American Negro Ballet, which existed for only a few years due to lack of support and financing. The experiences of early African American ballet dance pioneers like Rudolf Sawyer (1930s), Janet Collins (1950s), Raven Wilkinson (1950s) and Arthur Mitchell (1950s–1960s), who were employed with all-white ballet companies, are also explored. Whilst working with their companies they all experienced racism in the southern states of America. Although they worked among all-white casts, they were all

typecast/colour cast and/or sexualised in some of the roles they performed. For example, in Petrouchka, Sawyer performed the role of the Moor, whose character in this ballet is sexualised and lecherous towards the Ballerina, and relies on racist stereotypes when he plays with coconuts like a monkey in the Moor's Room scene. Another example is Mitchell's role in Agon, which involved an extremely sexual and sensual choreography when his body is entwined with Diana Adams'. Because Mitchell is black and Adams is white, the forbidden physical contact of two races on stage during a time of segregation in America made the ballet very risky. This ballet is described in more detail in Chapter Five. Collins performed Carmen and Aida, in which the colour of her skin and her perceived exoticism were seen to have enhanced the characters. These dancers represented the beginning of African Americans' inclusion in ballet, and colour casting enabled them to perform key roles. These concepts were explored further in the following chapters.

Whilst a few African American dancers were employed to perform in mainstream ballet companies, dance writers like Martin, Haskell and Stodelle questioned their suitability for ballet by racially categorising each race to their genre. Therefore, it was thought that African Americans should only perform vernacular or dances from the African diaspora, whilst white dancers would perform ballet, modern or traditional folk dances like Scottish dancing or Morris dancing. Categorising ballet via race made sense to them, particularly given the racial segregation in the country at the time. However, these ideologies are still 'covertly' evident today, as the dancers interviewed in Chapters Eight and Nine revealed. Eurocentric ideas of the black body still led white practitioners to de-familiarise the black dancer's anatomy through evolutionist stereotypes such as big bottoms and flat feet. This meant that the black dancer not only had to have the required body type to become a dancer, but their bodies were also observed through Eurocentric perceptions. These concepts were further evaluated in the following chapters.

Chapter Five, 'Striving for equality in the world of ballet: Representations of Arthur Mitchell and the Dance Theatre of Harlem', followed on from the example of an African American dancer's career examined in Chapter Four. Mitchell's career began as he was the first

African American to be employed with the New York City Ballet in 1956. This section evaluates the roles he performed under the artistic director, George Balanchine. Inspired by jazz music, Balanchine often worked with Mitchell on creating new ballets; however, there were limited roles available, and after fifteen years Mitchell left to create his own company, the Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) in 1969. He wanted to create a school for the diverse community of Harlem and establish an all-black ballet company so that dancers of colour would have an opportunity to perform more roles. Whilst Mitchell's company was mainly created in reaction to mainstream companies' not creating enough roles or opportunities for black dancers, his ethos has led many dancers to train and work with him since the 1970s, especially those coming from Britain. More details on black British dancers fleeing to DTH for career opportunities were discussed in Chapter Nine. DTH also influenced Cassa Pancho, the artistic director of Ballet Black in 2001, a company that seeks to create opportunities in ballet for dancers of black and Asian descent.

Chapter Six, 'Socio-cultural perceptions of ballet', provided an overview of different perspectives and perceptions of ballet. This included a brief analysis of ballet as a high art form in Britain, with reference to how it is funded by government bodies like the Arts Council and how it contributes to economic wealth through cultural tourism. This chapter examined how dance is valued, with reference to Sherril Dodds' (2011:27-28) research, which combines cultural studies theories with dance. By examining ballet as a high art form through Pierre Bourdieu's ([1986] 2011:82) theory of cultural capital and Paul Willis's (1996:2) concept of hierarchy, it became apparent that educated upper-middle classes are most likely to 'understand' high art. However, according to Bourdieu, in order for a lower/working-class person to understand these art forms, they also need to be knowledgeable and to be educated in the field. An example of an individual that broke these class barriers was examined through the screenplay and film Billy Elliot, about a working-class northern boy who became a ballet star. A further investigation used the example of a black British ballet dancer, Shevelle Dynott from Brixton, South London, who grew up on a council estate and who was able to become a successful ballet dancer with the English National Ballet. The final section of this chapter explored black parents' perceptions of ballet, and concluded that

a lack of cultural understanding of the art form was due in part to a lack of knowledge and exposure to the forms, as suggested by Bourdieu and Willis. Therefore, an education in the artform might have alleviated some of the parents' hesitations towards their children's career choice.

Since education is a key factor for encouraging children from diverse backgrounds to participate freely in ballet, Chapter Seven, 'British ballet companies' community outreach programmes', explored the Royal Ballet's Chance to Dance programme and the Birmingham Royal Ballet's Fast Track scheme through interviews with their former employees. Chance to Dance started in 1991 and celebrated its 25-year anniversary in 2016, whilst the Fast Track programme was established in 1997 and has been operating for 19 years, as of 2016. The positive aspects of both schemes gave the opportunity for many children from diverse backgrounds to experience ballet by participating in free classes and other activities like workshops by professional ballet dancers at the Birmingham Royal Ballet. These life-changing experiences provided children with the opportunity to take part in further studies in ballet if they passed the audition process. Successful children then went on to a two-year programme before auditioning for other vocational dance or performing arts schools. Although the programmes were not established as an enrolment tool for children from diverse backgrounds to enter ballet schools – which Darryl Jaffray, a former Royal Opera House Education Director and organiser of the Chance to Dance scheme, particularly stipulated in an interview (2010) – they were able to enjoy the experience of dance, hence the age range of 7 to 11-year-olds in both schemes.

The downside of both programmes was experienced by former employees who witnessed the social deprivation of children who attended these schemes. This may have hindered their further progression in dance at this stage. Lisa Thomas (2011), a former administrator for the Fast Track programme, stated that black parents did not consider ballet an appropriate art form for their children, as discussed in Chapter Seven. The audition process that Thomas witnessed was extremely biased, particularly the fact that it required photographs of potential students. If their body did not meet the aesthetic requirements for ballet in the photograph,

the dancers did not get an audition for the Royal Ballet, regardless of their talent. If more black students were chosen based on talent and trained their bodies for ballet, then there would be a greater number of dancers who could potentially get jobs within mainstream companies. If the children were successful in gaining a place at one of the vocational schools, they also depended heavily on funding. It is unfortunate that more black children from outreach programmes like the Chance to Dance or Fast Track in Britain were not able to attend vocational ballet schools, as this would have increased the potential numbers of black dancers in training and eventually their representation on stage.

Chapter Eight, 'Black British dancers and ballet training', presents interviews with black British dancers who trained at institutions like the Royal Ballet or the Legat School of Russian Ballet from 1970 to 2005. The first half of the chapter focused on the experiences of black British dancers and their training at the Royal Ballet Schools. Ballet dancers Garrett-Glassman (2010), Williams (2010), Panton (2008), Dynott (2010) and Gotobed (2010) trained there from the 1970s to 2005. Whilst these dancers had very good training with prestigious teachers, most of them experienced some form of discrimination. For example, Garrett-Glassman was told by the Upper School that they would train her, but not offer her employment because she was black, and she was encouraged to take contemporary dance classes. Panton experienced racial discrimination and bullying from his peers in the Lower boarding school at White Lodge, Richmond; whilst Dynott, a previous Chance to Dance student, had the unusual experience of a teacher constantly ignoring his presence in the classroom.

Black British dancers who went to other ballet schools or performing arts institutions were also evaluated to determine whether they too experienced acts of racial discrimination. Dancers Bailey (2010), Love (2012), Straker (2002), Felix (2015) trained at different institutions from the 1970s to the 1980s. Bailey trained at London School of Classical Dance; Love studied at Arts Education School; Straker attended Legat School of Russian Ballet and Felix went to Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance. Although Love wanted to become a ballet dancer, he was deterred from the art form by the school. Straker

experienced other forms of discrimination once she had finished training and attended outside classes; for instance, in a dance class at Pineapple Studios in London, a teacher corrected her posture before she began to do a pirouette. There was nothing wrong with her posture: the teacher thought she was sticking her bottom out. Whilst training Felix was praised by her teachers, but when she auditioned for the London Festival Ballet, now known as the English National Ballet, the director Beryl Grey would not offer her a contract because she was black – this incident clearly represented the effects of institutional racism.

All the dancers mentioned in Chapter Eight found employment with ballet companies in Britain or abroad, mainly with Dance Theatre of Harlem. Dancers experienced different level of institutional racism and were even persuaded to take classes in other dance forms and steered away from ballet. In comparison to earlier African American ballet dancers' experiences of racism described in Chapter Five, black British dancers' encounters were not as severe because they did not experience segregation. Nevertheless, regardless of equal opportunities policies, institutional racism is still alive within individual members of dance organisations, as discussed by Jaffray (2010).

Chapter Nine, 'Black British dancers' work experience', explored the careers of black dancers working in mainstream companies like the Royal Ballet, Birmingham Ballet, English National Ballet, Northern Theatre Ballet and the former London City Ballet. The aim of this chapter was to assess whether they were treated equally and to consider whether Eurocentric ideologies were still active. The black British dancers interviewed for this chapter were Evan Williams, Ben Love, Denzil Bailey, Darren Panton, Shevelle Dynott and Chantelle Gotobed, all of whom worked in mainstream ballet companies from the late 1980s to the present. It is important to note that there were not many female ballet dancers to interview about their experiences working in mainstream British ballet companies: they do exist, but they are not employed, and this area requires more research. Therefore, the interviews were mainly with black British men who shared their experiences, yet one important question remains: were they employed merely as 'token' black dancers in these companies?

Williams was the first black British dancer to be employed with the Birmingham Royal Ballet. Love worked with many companies like the Northern Ballet, English National Ballet and the former London City Ballet, to name but a few. Bailey also worked with the London City Ballet and the English National Ballet. Panton likewise performed with the London City Ballet. Dynott is currently with the English National Ballet and Gotobed was with the Northern Ballet. Williams and Dynott performed the role of the Moor in Petrouchka, as did African American dancer Randolph Sawyers; however, Williams was blacked-up for this role. Is it a coincidence that most examples of black male dancers have been colour cast since 1931, and as the Moor, for over 82 years in the same role? All the dancers performed roles in the *corps de ballet*; however, many dancers performed roles in which they wore costumes that concealed their face. Why does this happen so often with black dancers? Will black British dancers have to create their own companies like Pancho and Mitchell in order to prove and demonstrate their talent in diverse roles? What is the future for black British dancers?

The research aimed to establish the journey of British black dancers who were once excluded from ballet, founded on Eurocentric perceptions of the black body, as discussed in all chapters. Through a brief historical overview from the eighteenth century onwards, key periods in time were chosen to reflect how institutional racism hindered the progression of black dancers in ballet and are still evident today. On the other hand, this study found many examples of how black dancers were included in the ballet profession, as discussed in Chapters Four to Nine. The complexity of this research has highlighted the history of black dancers and how their lives were shaped by the dominant ideals of society, which influenced their experiences within the ballet industry.

Why are black dancers under-represented in British ballet?

Consolidating all the key points from the chapters in this thesis has established an overview of why there is a lack of black dancers in mainstream British ballet. However, it is important to bear in mind that these results can also be applied to wider perceptions of dancers from the African diaphora. In this thesis, the conclusion is based on two key areas: the historical and the cultural. This study found that the historical treatment of black dancers is still

reflected in current performances. For example, Chapter Two discussed the Eurocentric ideologies that have affected perceptions of the black dancing body and how it has been racially categorised as suitable to performing only black vernacular dance forms or dances from the African diaspora. Therefore, dancers have either been dissuaded from entering ballet as a profession, or when they do, their careers are restricted to being in the *corps de ballet*; to having their faces covered; or to being type/colour cast in sexualised or erotic/exotic roles. The primary way that black dancers are represented in non-racialised roles are in some modern ballets. Traditional ballets still include racialised and stereotypical roles like the character of the Moor in Petrouchka or the role of Arabian Coffee in The Nutcracker. Can artistic directors make more enlightened choices about who performs these parts? This issue in ballet repertoire, with reference to both traditional and modern ballets, requires further research. These are some of the examples that contribute to why black dancers are not progressing in ballet due to the Eurocentric ideologies that are still active in wider society as well as mainstream ballet companies. This research has mainly been based on representation in traditional ballets, although it is important to mention George Balanchine's modern ballet Agon, which highlighted sexual and racial stereotypes, as discussed in Chapter Five, but it also challenged them.

There has not been a strong interest in ballet so far among black people/people from the African diaspora living in Britain, nor have they had much cultural understanding of ballet as an art form. One reason for this is that, historically, black people have not been associated with performing ballet. However, by educating people and by ensuring that the historical influence of black people in ballet is more widely known (as proposed in Chapter One), this would ensure that black people remain part of ballet's creative inspiration, even though they have been represented in some of the ballet repertoire as racial stereotypes. On the other hand, if there were an increase of black dancers in ballet, filtered through programmes like the Chance to Dance and Fast Track programmes based on talent rather than photographs, then dancer's bodies can be moulded through their training, as was discussed by dance scholar Ramsay Burt (1998:63-64) in Chapter Four. One main problem preventing black dancers from progressing in British ballet is social deprivation. It could be argued that in

Cuba, where former principal dancer of the Royal Ballet Company Carlos Acosta was born, social deprivation did not prevent him from becoming a professional artist, though an important distinction is that ballet in Cuba is free for all to learn. To conclude, greater education about ballet through the representation of ballet's diverse origins, with reference to identifying key historical black themes in repertoire, may increase acceptance among black communities by demonstrating a black presence and lead to a greater understanding of the art form. Parents in black communities may be more likely to allow their children to participate when there is a greater sense of belonging. This would eventually increase the number of black dancers who enter a career in ballet.

What is the future for black dancers in British ballet?

This thesis concludes that the key to solving the under-representation of black dancers in British ballet is to create more opportunities for representation through inclusion within institutions and on the stage. This can include the points made above: creating more new ballets with diverse roles for black dancers based on their talent rather than their ethnicity; providing more opportunities for schools to attend ballet performances of interesting ballets; increasing access to ballet training institutions and increasing monitoring in all dance schools – meaning local schools – across Britain for the effectiveness of equal opportunities, as suggested by Jaffray (2010). In my opinion, the future is total inclusion to reflect the diverse multicultural society that we live in.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Arts Council of England
ArtsEd	Arts Education School
BB	Ballet Black
BRB	Birmingham Royal Ballet
CTD	Chance to Dance
DT	Dance Track
DTH	Dance Theatre of Harlem
ENB	English National Ballet
JA	Junior Associates
JBSD	Joyce Butler School of Dance
LFB	London Festival Ballet
LCB	London City Ballet
NYCB	New York City Ballet
PVP	Pre-vocational programmes
RAD	Royal Academy of Dance
RB	Royal Ballet
RBC	Royal Ballet Company
RBS	Royal Ballet School
ROH	Royal Opera House
SA	Senior Associates
Met	Metropolitan Opera Ballet
USA	United States of America

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Published article

Bourne, Sandie (8 September 2011) Why are there so few Black dancers in British Ballet? The Creative Case for Diversity innovation and excellence in the arts. Available at: <http://www.creativecase.org.uk/creativecase-why-are-there-so-few-black-dancers>

On observation, there are very few Black British dancers in UK ballet companies and these dancers are largely unknown by the general public. An informal survey of UK ballet companies' websites in 2011 revealed, for example, that the English National Ballet has 65 dancers in the company of which, Shevelle Dynott an artist of the company is the only black British dancer. Junior soloist Yonah Acosta, Brazilian and Cuban Junor Souza are also members of the company. The Royal Ballet lists 95 dancers of which Carlos Acosta, principal guest artist from Cuba and African American, Eric Underwood are the only black dancers. The Birmingham Royal Ballet features 54 dancers and two are black, first soloist Tyrone Singleton a black British dancer and soloist Céline Gittens a Trinidadian born and Canadian citizen. The Northern Ballet has company of 33 dancers and none are black. The informal survey shows that the four mainstream ballet companies employ a total of 247 dancers of which the total number of black ballet dancers represented is seven, i.e. over 2%, a percentage consistent with the proportion of Black people in the UK population, as revealed in the National Statistics Census 2001. Yet, the total number of Black British dancers employed in the four mainstream ballet companies are two, which is under 1%. This indicates an underrepresentation in direct contrast to the 2% proportionate representation. Although statistical information can represent a specific research opinion, it does not reveal a true reflection of black dancers' progression within the ballet profession. Why are the numbers of black dancers in the British ballet low? Is finance or 'cultural antipathy' i.e. cultural opinions or parental influence helping or hindering progression? Does racial identity obstruct success?

From a historical perspective, black dancers in the diaspora were 'pigeon-holed' into performing traditional and social dance forms. To break the mould, black students who wanted to establish a career in 'modern' dance styles were encouraged to train and perform

in jazz, modern and contemporary dance companies. Research found that black dancers were discouraged from studying ballet, owing to their perceived anatomy being considered unsuitable to perform ballet because their backs were 'too curved' or their 'posteriors too high'. Are these perceptions still current? Arguably, some dancers from diverse ethnicities have similar 'flawed' anatomies and are also said to be incompatible to perform ballet. The concept of the 'ideal' anatomy was evidently constructed by the founders of ballet, the European ballet masters and their institutions. The ideal ballet dancer's physique is often described as a lean body, long neck, shortened torso, good turnout (hip mobility) and long limbs. This description does not mention the ethnicity of the dancer and is not stated as a requirement.

The concept of ballet and beauty became romanticised by 19th century writers such as Théophile Gautier who idealised ballerinas as feminine, virginal and pure. These ideals were illustrated through dancers such as Marie Taglioni and Fanny Elssler in the late 1830s. Arguably, these findings suggest that qualities needed to become a professional dancer are not solely confined to having the right physique, but also include a Western concept of beauty which is exemplified by 'whiteness'. In contrast the black body had been exploited by the slave trade, the profits of which underpinned the Industrial Revolution. Black people were categorized as primitive, savage, ugly, lazy and highly sexual. Although some Eurocentric stereotypes of Black people were negative and demeaning, some black dancers who have the "right" physique have become very successful in finding employment in ballet companies. Key African-American dancers such as Janet Collins who was the first African-American dancer to perform with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet in 1951; ballerina Raven Wilkinson, the first African-American to tour with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1954 and Arthur Mitchell, the first African-American principal dancer hired full-time in 1955 to perform with the New York City Ballet at a time when the USA was still racially segregated. African-American dancers experienced a lack of employment opportunities in mainstream ballet companies often due to the operation of a colour bar. Research found black ballet dancers in Britain faced a similar scenario as well. It was not until the late 1980s, the English National Ballet, formally known as the London Festival Ballet, hosted Noel Wallace as the first black male dancer and Brenda Edwards as the first black female dancer to perform in the company.

If the performance ability of the mentioned black ballet dancers is unquestionable, then it can be argued that preconceptions from the 'white' gaze or 'colonial racialization' as described by sociologist Stuart Hall (1997:274) of the 'black (dancing) body', may be a contributing factor prohibiting black dancers from accessing careers as professional ballet dancers. Sociologist Paul Willis (1990:1) notes, that "institutions and practices, genres and terms of high art are currently categories of exclusion more than of inclusion." If black dancers' experience exclusion, are more ballet companies like Cassa Pancho's Ballet Black a UK based company or Arthur Mitchell's Dance Theatre of Harlem in the USA, required for black dancers to make their presence known as ballet dancers too?

In reaction to exclusionary practices which Black dancers have experienced within ballet institutions, recommendations for change and more 'inclusionary' practices have taken effect; for example the Arts Council of Great Britain commissioned Naseem Khan's (1976:105) report which highlights the concerns of access to employment for black dancers in ballet companies. Graham Devlin (1989, 64) reported on developing access for black communities to classical dance. In both cases recommendations were made and ballet institutions have brought about change through the development of community outreach programmes, like the Royal Ballet's 'Chance to Dance' scheme established in 1991. Still, the numbers of talented Black British ballet dancers are low and they are still moving towards contemporary or other dance forms because they are more accessible and diverse. How are Black British dancers able to reach the high calibre of Carlos Acosta when ballet institutions accommodate for inclusionary practices?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acosta, Carlos (2007) *No Way Home: A Cuban Dancer's Story*. London: HarperPress.
- Adair, Christy (1992) *Women and Dance: Sylphs and Sirens*. London: Macmillian.
- Adair, Christy (2007) *Dancing the black question: The Phoenix Dance Company Phenomenon*. London: Dance Books Ltd.
- Adair, Christy and Burt, Ramsay (2017) *British Dance: Black Routes*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Adewole, Funmi, Dick Matchett and Colin Prescod (2007) *Voicing Black Dance: The British Experience –1930s-1990s*. London: Association of Dance of the African Diaspora.
- Adshead-Lansdale, Janet and June Layson, (1994) *Dance History: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Albright, Ann Cooper (1997) *Choreographing Difference: Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Allen, Zita D. (July 1976) "Blacks in Ballet." *Dance Magazine*, pp.65–70.
- Aloff, Mindy (2006) *Dance Anecdotes: Stories from the Worlds of Ballet, Broadway, the Ballroom, and Modern Dance*. New York: OUP USA.
- "American Negro Ballet Company scrapbook 1937–1983." In *New York Public Library Archives & Manuscripts*. Available at: <http://archives.nypl.org/scm/20924> (Accessed: 15/02/14).
- Anderson, Jack (2010) *The One and Only: The Ballet Russe De Monte Carlo*. Binsted: Dance Books Ltd.
- Anderson, Zoë (2006) *The Royal Ballet: 75 Years*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Andreatta, Susan and Ferraro, Gary P. *Elements of Culture: An Applied Perspective*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.
- Arts Council of England (20 June, 2016) "Arts Council England's analysis of its investment in large-scale opera and ballet." *Arts Council of England*. Available at: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Analysis_of_Opera_and_Ballet.pdf (Accessed: 18/03/17).
- Arts Council of England (no date) "Elevate." Available at: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/elevate#section-2>. (Accessed: 18/03/17).
- Arts Council of England (no date) "National Portfolio Funding Programme." Available at: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-for-funding/national-portfolio-funding-programme>. (Accessed: 22/09/16).
- Arts Educational Schools London (no date) "History." Available at: <https://artsed.co.uk/site/information/About-Us> (Accessed: 22/09/16).
- Arts4dementia (15 September, 2011), Jane Hackett, Director of Creative Learning, Sadler's Wells, Available at: <http://www.arts4dementia.org.uk/FAQs/jane-hackett-director-of-creative-learning-sadlers-wells>. (Accessed: 22/04/16).
- Aschenbrenner, Joyce (1998) "Katherine Dunham: Anthropologist, Artist, Humanist." In Harrison, Ira E. and Harrison, Faye V., *African-American Pioneers in Anthropology*, Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Aschenbrenner, Joyce (2002) *Katherine Dunham: Dancing a Life*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Ballet Black (19 April, 2011) "Arts Council Cuts." In *Dancing Times*. Available at: http://www.dancing-times.co.uk/news/item/454-arts_council_cuts. (Accessed: 22/04/11).
- Ballet Black, (no date) Available at: <http://balletblack.co.uk/#>. (Accessed: 07/13/16).
- Banes, Sally (1994) *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Banes, Sally (1998) *Dancing Women: Female Bodies Onstage*. London: Routledge.
- Barber, Lynn (9 August, 2009) The interview: Michael Clark, Edinburgh festival. *The Observer*, Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/aug/09/interview-michael-clark-ballet-dancer>. (Accessed: 12/11/15).
- Barnard, Malcolm (1998) *Art, Design, and Visual Culture: An Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Barnes, Clive (9 April, 1966) "Ballet: Balanchine's 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'" In *The New York Times*.
- Barrowclough, Anne (4 July, 1991) "Making a splash in Swan Lake." In *Daily Mail*. pp.25.
- Batiste, Stephanie (2012) *Darkening Mirrors: Imperial Representation in Depression-era*

- African American Performance. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Bellow, Juliet (2013) Modernism on Stage. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Bennett, Catherine (28 September, 2014) "What price artistic freedom when the bullies turn up?" In The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/28/exhibit-b-barbican-censorship-lee-jasper-hilary-mantel>. (Accessed: 23/03/17).
- Bernal, Martin (1991) Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization Volume One: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985. (New edition). New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Bever, Lindsey, (1 July, 2015) "Misty Copeland's mentor: The courageous black ballerina who defined." In Washington Post. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/07/01/misty-copelands-mentor-the-courageous-black-ballerina-who-defied-racism/?utm_term=.993d337d8e72. (Accessed: 23/09/15).
- Bhattacharyya, Jibesh (2007) Othello (Atlantic Critical Studies). India: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors Pvt Ltd.
- Birmingham Royal Ballet (no date) Available at: <https://www.brb.org.uk/the-company/dancers-and-ballet-staff> (Accessed: 23/01/16).
- Birmingham Royal Ballet (no date) "Tyrone Singleton." Available at: <https://www.brb.org.uk/profile/tyrone-singleton>. (Accessed: 26/04/16).
- Birmingham Royal Ballet (no date) "Brandon Lawrence." Available at: <https://www.brb.org.uk/profile/brandon-lawrence>. (Accessed: 26/04/16).
- Bloom, Harold (2010) A Midsummer Night's Dream - William Shakespeare (Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations). New York: Chelsea House Publishers.
- Borshuk, Michael (2003) "Queen of the colonial exposition: Josephine Baker's strategic performance." In Phillips, Kimberley L., Pinson, Hermine, Thomas, Lorenzo & Wallinger, Hanna (eds.) Critical Voicings of Black Liberation: Resistance and Representation in the Americas. Volume 11 of FORECAAST, Forum for European Contributions to African American Studies. Munster: Lit Verlag.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1984) "Distinction." In Hall, Stuart (1997) Representations and Cultural Signifying Practices London: SAGE.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1987) Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre ([1986] 2011) "The Forms of Capital." In Szeman, Imre and Timothy Kaposy. In Cultural Theory: An Anthology. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Bourne, Stephen (2005) Black in the British Frame: The Black Experience in British Film and Television (Continuum Collection Series). London: Continuum-3PL; Rev Ed edition.
- British Library, (no date) Baroness Blackstone, Available at: <http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/governance/blboard/memberslist/bblackstone/> (Accessed: 22/04/16).
- British Museum Collection Database (no date) "Tomb relief: EA718." Available at: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=111373&partId=1 (Accessed: 20/07/11).
- Brown, Carol (1994) "Re-tracing our steps: The possibilities for feminist dance histories." In Adshead-Lansdale, Janet and June Layson. Dance History: An Introduction. London: Routledge.
- Buckland, Theresa Jill (2014) "Dance and evolutionary thought in late Victorian discourse." In Lightman, Bernard, V. & Zon, Bennett (eds.) Evolution and Victorian Culture. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burt, Ramsay (1995) "The Male Dancer: Bodies, Spectacle and Sexuality." London: Routledge.
- Burt, Ramsay (1998) Alien Bodies: Representations of Modernity, 'Race' and Nation in Early Modern Dance. London: Routledge.
- Burt, Ramsay (2001) "Dissolving in pleasures: The treat of the queer male body." In Desmond, Jane C., Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities on the off the Stage. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Burt, Ramsay (2001) "The trouble with the male dancer." In Cooper Albright, Ann and Ann Dils. Moving History/ Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader. Middleton: Wesleyan University Press.
- Butterworth, Jo (2011) Dance Studies: The Basics. London: Routledge.

- Callahan, Vicki (2010) Reclaiming the Archive: Feminism and Film History (Contemporary Approaches to Film and Television Series). Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.
- Caponi-Tabery, Gena (2008) Jump for Joy: Jazz, Basketball, and Black Culture in 1930s America. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Carnes, Mark C. (2005) American National Biography: Supplement 2. New York: OUP USA.
- Carroll, Rebecca (2006) Uncle Tom or New Negro? New York: Broadway.
- Carter, Alexandra (2003) Rethinking Dance History: A Reader. Oxon: Routledge.
- Carter, Alexandra (2005) Dance and Dancers in the Victorian and Edwardian Music Hall Ballet. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Carty, Hilary S., Bob Ramdhanie and Pawlet Brookes (2013) Hidden Movement: Contemporary Voices of Black British Dance. Leicester: Serendipity Artists Movement Ltd.
- Cassidy, Suzanne (29 December, 1990) "Blacks Dance with the Royal Ballet." Special to the New York Times. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/12/29/arts/blacks-dance-with-the-royal-ballet.html>. (Accessed: 04/08/15).
- Chamberlain, Mary (1998) Caribbean Migration: Globalized Identities. London: Routledge.
- Chapman, Erin D. (2012) Prove It On Me: New Negroes, Sex, and Popular Culture in the 1920s. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Cheng, Anne Anlin (2010) Second Skin: Josephine Baker & the Modern Surface. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Childs, Martin (2 May, 2014) "Gailene Stock: Dancer and teacher who became a successful, if controversial, Director of the Royal Ballet School." The Independent, Obituaries, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/gailene-stock-dancer-and-teacher-who-became-a-successful-if-controversial-director-of-the-royal-ballet-school-9318480.html> (Accessed: 16/09/15).
- Childs, Peter and Michael Storry (1999) Encyclopedia of Contemporary British Culture. London: Routledge.
- Chilvers, Ian ([1990], 2009) The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists. Oxford: OUP.
- Chrisafis, Angelique (29 November 2011) "Online Paris show unveils life in human zoo. Sense of shock as exhibition reveals how people were displayed in freak show in the 19th and early 20th centuries." The Guardian. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/29/huam-zoo-paris-exhibition> (Accessed: 12/05/15).
- Clarke, Mary (November, 1993) "A Chance to Dance – a Royal Ballet Education Project." In The Dancing Times, pp 169-171.
- Clarke, Mary & Crisp, Clement (1973) Ballet: An Illustrated History. New York, NY: Universe Books.
- Clippinger, Karen (2007) Dance Anatomy and Kinesiology. Champaign: Human Kinetics. Australia.
- Cohen, Phil (1999) New Ethnicities, Old Racisms. London: Zed Books.
- Cohen, Selma Jeanne (1986) Next Week, Swan Lake. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Cohen, Selma Jeanne (2011) The Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Companhia Olga Roriz, (no date) "About the company, Olga Roriz biography." Available at: http://www.olgaroriz.com/conteudos/en/historial_olga_roriz_en.html (Accessed: 02/03/16).
- Conner, Lynne (1997) Spreading the Gospel of the Modern Dance: Newspaper Dance Criticism in the United States, 1850-1934. University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Cooper Albright, Ann and Dils, Ann (2001) Moving History/ Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Cooper, Adam (no date) Biography. Available at: <http://www.adam-cooper.com/biography.htm> (Accessed: 09/05/16).
- Cottle, Simon & Saha Anjan (2002) (no date) Available at: A Glass Ceiling Report, London. <http://www.itc-arts.org/index>. (Accessed: 02/05/2011).
- Cowan, Alison Leigh (9 January, 2008) "Ernestine Stodelle, 95, Modern Dancer, Dies." In The New York Times, Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/02/arts/dance/frederick-ashton-festival-in-sarasota-honors-a-legacy.html?_r=0 (Accessed: 05/08/16).

- Craine, Debra and Judith Mackrell (2010) The Oxford Dictionary of Dance. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Croft, Clare (2015) Dancers as Diplomats: American Choreography in Cultural Exchange. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Daly, Anne (1995) Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Daly, Ann (2002a) Critical Gestures: Writing on Dance and Culture. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Daly, Ann (2002b) Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Dance Theatre of Harlem (no date) "Facts Timeline." Available at: <http://dancetheatreofharlem2010.businesscatalyst.com/howeare> (Accessed: 23/04/16).
- Dance Theatre of Harlem (no date) Outreach, "Dancing Through Barriers." Available at: <http://www.dancetheatreofharlem.org/outreach/index.html> (Accessed: 23/04/16).
- Dance Theatre of Harlem (no date) Who We Are, Legacy, Available at: <http://www.dancetheatreofharlem.org/legacy> (Accessed: 23/04/16).
- Dance UK (11 December, 2012), Birmingham Royal Ballet Celebrates the success of its Dance Track Programme, Available at: <https://www.danceuk.org/news/article/birmingham-royal-ballet-celebrates-success-its-dance-track-programme/> (Accessed: 08/05/16).
- Dance UK (2011) (no date) Available at : <http://www.danceuk.org/resources/dance-facts/>. (Accessed: 20/04/15).
- Darwin, Charles (1859) The Origin of Species. London: John Murray.
- Darwin, Charles (1871) The Descent of Man, Selection in Relation to Sex. London: John Murray.
- David, Jonathan C. (2007) Together Let Us Sweetly Live: The Singing and Praying Bands (Music in American Life). Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- Deans, Joselli Audain (2000) "The Marginalization of African American Ballet Dancers as Reflected in Dance Critical Literature: 1980 – 1990." In Dancing in the Millennium, An International Conference Proceedings, Washington Marriott Hotel, George Washington University, Kennedy Centre, Washington, DC, July 19-23, 2000.
- DeFrantz, Thomas (1996) "Simmering passivity: The black male body in concert dance." In Morris, Gay (ed.) Moving Words: Re-Writing Dance. London: Routledge.
- DeFrantz, Thomas F. (2000) "Ballet in Black: Louis Johnson and African American Vernacular Humour in Ballet." In: Doolittle, Lisa & Flynn, Anne, (eds.) Dancing Bodies, Living Histories: New Writings about Dance and Culture. Banff: The Banff Centre Press pp.179-195.
- DeFrantz, Thomas F. (2002) Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- DeFrantz, Thomas F. (2004) "The Black Beat Made Visible, Hip Hop Dance and Body Power." In Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on Dance and Performance Theory. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- DeFrantz, Thomas F. (2006) Dancing Revelations: Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Deloitte LLP, (2015) Birmingham Royal Ballet, Report and Financial Statement. Birmingham.
- DeLuzio, Crista (2009) Women's Rights: People and Perspectives (Perspectives in American Social History Series). Goleta, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- De Montfort University, Leicester, Research (no date) British Dance and the African Diaspora. Available at: <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/research-faculties-and-institutes/art-design-humanities/centre-for-interdisciplinary-research-in-dance/projects/british-dance-and-the-african-diaspora/british-dance-and-the-african-diaspora-research-project.aspx> (Accessed: 02/02/17).
- Denby, Edwin (1957) "Three Sides of 'Agon'." In Evergreen Review (Winter 1959).
- Denby, Edwin (1983) "Dance Writings." In Copeland, Roger and Marshall Cohen What is Dance? Readings in Theory and Criticism. Los Angeles: Galaxy Books. pp.461.
- Denby, Edwin (1986) Dance Writings, London: Random House Inc.
- Desmond J.C. (1997) Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance (Post-Contemporary Interventions). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- DePrince, Michaela and Elaine (2015) Hope in a Ballet Shoe. London: Faber & Faber.
- Descutner, Janet (2010) Asian Dance (World of Dance). New York: Chelsea House Publishers.
- Devine, Paul (11 May, 2005) "Brixton's Billy Elliot; as the Stage Version of the Hit Film Opens, as Rising Star Tells of His Difficult Journey from a Council Estate to the Royal Ballet." In Evening Standard. Available at: <http://vlex.com/vid/brixton-billy-elliott-opens-journey-ballet-61947753>. (Accessed: 22/09/2006)
- Devlin, Graham (1989) Stepping Forward. London: Arts Council Dance Department.
- Devlin, Graham Culture Shift Available at: <http://culture-shift.eu/graham-devlin-cultural-strategist> (Accessed: 17/07/15).
- Dinerstein, Joel (2003) Swinging the Machine: Modernity, Technology and African American Culture Between the World Wars. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Dixon, Brenda (1990) "Black Dance and Dancers and the white Public: a Prolegomenon to Problems of Definition." In Black American Literature Forum, Vol. 24, No. 1. Spring, pp.117-123.
- Dodds, Sherril (2011) Dancing on the Canon, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd.
- Donnell, Alison (2001) Companion to Contemporary Black British Culture. London: Routledge.
- Doolittle, L & Flynn, A (2000) Dancing Bodies, Living Histories: New Writings about Dance and Culture. Banff: The Banff Centre Press.
- Dougill, David (20 July, 1986) "Why black dancers fail at the barre – David Dougill investigates ballet's colour problems." In The Sunday Times, p.44.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. ([1903] 2002) The Souls of Black Folk. New York: Dover Publications.
- Duiker, William J. & Spielvogel, Jackson (2007) The Essential World History. (3rd ed.) Boston: Wadsworth.
- Dunning, Jennifer (1989) Alvin Ailey: A Life In Dance. Massachusetts: Da Capo Press.
- Dunning, Jennifer (2009) Matt Turney, Longtime Dancer with Martha Graham, Dies at 84, The New York Times, 29 December. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/29/arts/dance/29turney.html?scp=1&sq=Matt%20Turney%20and%20Appalachian%20Spring&st=cse> (Accessed: 16/03/11).
- Dunning, Jennifer and William McDonald (2014) "Geoffrey Holder, Dancer, Actor, Painter and More, Dies at 84." In The New York Times, 6 October. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/07/arts/geoffrey-holder-dancer-choreographer-and-man-of-flair-dies-at-84.html?_r=0#. (Accessed: 06/03/17).
- Dyer, Richard (1997) White: Essays on Race and Culture. London: Routledge.
- Dyer, Richard (2011) In The Space Of A Song: The Uses of Song in Film. London: Routledge.
- Dynott, Shevelle (no date) English National Ballet Available at: <http://www.ballet.org.uk/editorial.php?ref=dancers> (Accessed: 22/04/11)
- Dynott, Shevelle (no date) International Slavery Museum, Liverpool. Available at: http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/exhibitions/blackbritannia/shevelle_dynott.aspx. (Accessed: 23/04/11)
- Earle, Jonathan (2000) The Routledge Atlas of African American History. London: Routledge.
- Ellis, Havelock ([1905] 1992) "Studies in the psychology of sex." In Gilman, S. L. (ed.) Black Bodies, White Bodies in 'Race' Culture & Difference, Donald, James and Ali Rattansi. London: Sage Publications.
- Emery, Lynne Fauley (1988) Black Dance from 1619 to today. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Book Company.
- English National Ballet (no date) Available at: <http://www.ballet.org.uk/the-company/our-history/> (Accessed: 03/02/16).
- Equal Opportunities Act 2010 (no date) Available at: http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=714&Itemid=543 (Accessed: 22/01/16).
- Equal Opportunities policies (no date) http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/equality/guidance-and-resources/lgbt_equality_toolkit/equal_opportunities_policies.cfm (Accessed: 22/01/16).
- Evening Standard (8 June, 2010). "Ruffled feathers: Swan Lake dancers take their show on the road." In Evening Standard. Available at: <http://www.standard.co.uk/goingout/theatre/ruffled-feathers-swan-lake-dancers-take->

- their-show-on-the-road-6478184.html (Accessed: 20/08/2016).
- fabcat, (7 June, 2012) "Cassa Pancho on Ballet Black." In Cambridge News. Available at: <http://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/Cassa-Pancho-Ballet-Black/story-22775806-detail/story.html> (Accessed: 07/03/16).
- Farquharson, Joseph T (2005) "Faiya-bon, The socio-pragmatics of homophobia in Jamaican (Dancehall) culture." In Migge, Bettina and Susanne Muhleisen, Politeness and Face in Caribbean Creoles, John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Fensham, Rachel (2011) "Nature, Force and Variation." In Carter, Alexandra and Rachel Fensham. Dancing Naturally: Nature, Neo-Classicism and Modernity in Early Twentieth-Century Dance. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fischer-Hornmung Dorothea and Alison D. Goeller (2001) Embodying Liberation: The Black Body in American Dance. Volume 4 of FORECAAST, Forum for European Contributions to African American Studies. Munster: Lit Verlag.
- Fiske, John; Hartley; John Martin Montgomery; Tim O'Sullivan and Danny Saunders. Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies. London: Routledge.
- Fisher, Barbara (2006) In Balanchine's Company. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Fisher, Burton D. (2000) Aida (Opera Journey Mini Guide Series). Boca Raton: Opera Journeys Pub.
- Fisher, Jennifer (2003) "'Arabian Coffee' in the Land of the Sweets." In Dance Research Journal, Vol. 35/36. 146-163.
- Fisher, Jennifer (2016) "Ballet and Whiteness: Will Ballet Be the Kingdom of the Pale?" In Shay, Antony and Barbara Seller-Young. The Oxford Handbook, Dance and Ethnicity. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Flam, Jack and Miriam Deutch (2003) Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History (Documents of Twentieth-Century Art). Oakland: University of California Press.
- Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn (2005) Race and Racism: An Introduction. California: AltaMira Press.
- Foster, Susan Leigh (1997) "Dancing Bodies." In Desmond, Jane C. (1997) Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Foster, Susan Leigh (2001) "Simply(?) the Doing of It, Like Two Arms Going Round and Round." In Dils, Ann and Ann Cooper Albright (2001) Moving History/ Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Foulkes, Julia L. (2002) Modern Bodies: Dance and American Modernism from Martha Graham to Alvin Ailey. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Fraleigh, Horon (1995) Dance and the Lived Body. (New ed.) Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Francis, Rain (no date) "Australian Dance Vision a vision of excellence." In Dance Informa Australian Edition. Available at: <http://dancemagazine.com.au/2016/01/penny-lancaster-talks-australian-dance-vision-syllabus/> (Accessed: 15/04/16).
- Freyre, Gilberto ([1933] 1964) The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Friedman, David M. (2008) A Mind of Its Own: A Cultural History of the Penis. London: Robert Hale.
- Frobenius, Leo (1909) The Childhood of Man. London: Seeley & Company.
- Fryer, Peter (1984) Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain: Black People in Britain Since 1504. London: Pluto Press.
- Galinsky, Karl (1992) Classical and Modern Interactions: Postmodern Architecture, Multiculturalism, Decline and Other Issues. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Gallagher, Charles A. and Cameron D. Lippard (2014) Race and Racism in the United States: An Encyclopaedia of the American Mosaic. Portsmouth, NH: Greenwood.
- Garafola, Lynn (1997) Rethinking the Sylph: New Perspective on the Romantic Ballet. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Garafola, Lynn (2005) Legacies of Twentieth-century Dance. Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.
- Garafola, Lynn (2009) Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.
- Gardner, Lynne (27 October, 2010) "Can a Fela Kuti musical change British theatre's tune?" The Guardian, in Theatre Blog with Lyn Gardner. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/theatreblog/2010/oct/27/fela-kuti-national-theatre-london>. (Accessed: 21/03/12)

- Gates Jr. Henry Louis and Charles Molesworth (2012) The Works of Alain Locke (Collected Black Writings). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gates, Henry Louis and Cornel West (2002) The African-American Century: How Black Americans Have Shaped Our Country. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Gay, Roxane (12 May, 2014) "Beyoncé's control of her image belies the bell hooks 'slave' critique." The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/12/beyonce-bell-hooks-slave-terrorist>. (Accessed: 22/03/17).
- Gaynor Camron School of Dance (no date) Juliet Ratnage School of Performing Arts. Available at: <http://www.julietratnage.co.uk> (Accessed: 23/08/15).
- George-Graves, Nadine (2010) Urban Bush Women: Twenty Years of African American Dance Theatre, Community Engagement, and Working It Out. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Genné, Beth (2000) "Creating a Canon, Creating the 'Classics' in Twentieth-Century British Ballet." In Dance Research, Volume 18 Issue2, pp. 132-62.
- Ghent, Henri (1980) "Dance Theatre of Harlem: A Study of Triumph Over Adversity." In The Crisis.
- Gilbert, Katherine Everett ([1941] 1983) "Mind and medium in the modern dance." In Copeland, Roger and Marshall Cohen (eds.) What Is Dance? Readings in Theory and Criticism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gilbert, Morris (1 February, 1953) "Up and Coming – Janet Collins, the Met's prima ballerina, started her dancing A B C's at ten." In The New York Times.
- Gillard, David (7 August, 1979) "At last, Julie's night of triumph." Daily Mail, pp.9.
- Gilman, Sander ([1985] 1997) "Black bodies, white bodies: Toward an iconography of female sexuality in late nineteenth-century art, medicine, and literature." In Hall, Stuart (1997) Representations and Cultural Signifying Practices. London: Sage.
- Gilroy, Paul (1995) The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Glaister, Dan (2 December, 1998) Chris Ofili. In The Guardian. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/1998/dec/02/20yearsoftheturnerprize.turnerprize1>. (Accessed: 02/03/14)
- Gobineau, Joseph-Arthur Comte de (1853) The Inequality of Human Races. London: William Heinemann.
- Goldberg, David Theo (1993) Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Gotobed, Chantelle (no date) Available at: <http://swanlaketour.com/cast-creative-team/chantelle-gotobed?iframe=true> (Accessed: 23/06/15).
- Gottlieb, Robert (2004) George Balanchine: The Ballet Maker, HarperCollins, Publish.
- Gottschild, Brenda Dixon (1998) Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance Dance and Other Contexts (Contributions in Afro-American & African Studies). Connecticut: Praeger Publishers.
- Gottschild, Brenda Dixon (2002) Waltzing in the Dark: African American Vaudeville and Race Politics in the Swing Era. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gottschild, Brenda Dixon (2003) The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gottschild, Brenda Dixon (2011) Joan Myers Brown and the Audacious Hope of the Black Ballerina. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Graff, Ellen (1997) Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928-1942. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Graff, Ellen (2001) "The Dance Is a Weapon." In Dils, Ann and Cooper Albright, Ann (2001) Moving History/ Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Greskovic, Robert (2005) Ballet 101: A Complete Guide to Learning and Loving the Ballet. New York: Limelight Editions.
- Grau, Andrée (1993) "Myths of origin." Dance Now, 2(4) pp.38-43.
- Grau, Andrée (2008) "Dance and the Shifting Sands of Multiculturalism." In Munsu, Urmimala Sarkar, Dance: Transcending Borders. Tulika Books: New Delhi.
- Grau, Andrée (2010) "Figure skating and the anthropology of dance: The case of Oksana Domnina and Maxim Shabalin." In Slovene Anthropological Society, Anthropological Notebooks, 16(3) pp.39-59.

- Green MacDonald, Joyce (2002) Women and Race in Early Modern Texts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Green, David (1984) "Classified subjects: photography and anthropology – the technology of power." In Hall, Stuart (1997) Representations and Cultural Signifying Practices. London: Sage.
- Green, Jill (2000) "Power, Service, and Reflexivity in a Community Dance Project." In Research in Dance Education, Vol. 1, No. 1 pp 53-67.
- Green, Richard (2002) "(Up) Staging the Primitive: Pearl Primus and 'the Negro Problem'." In Defrantz, Thomas F. (ed.) Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance (Studies in Dance History). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Greene, Jonnie (February 1997) "Classic black dance and dancers." Dance Magazine. pp.86-91.
- Greskovic, Robert (2005) Ballet 101: A Complete Guide to Learning and Loving the Ballet. Winona: Limelight Editions.
- Gruen, John (1976) The private world of ballet. London: Penguin.
- Gruen, John (1990) People Who Dance. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Guest, Ivor (1984) The Dancer's Heritage: A Short Story of Ballet. London: Dancing Times.
- Hackett, Jane (1999) Tracks in the community, People Dancing. Available at: <http://www.communitydance.org.uk/DB/animated-library/tracks-in-the-community.html?ed=14052>, (Accessed: 08/05/16).
- Hagood, Thomas (2008) Legacy in Dance Education: Essays and Interviews on Values, Practices, and People. Amherst: Cambria Press.
- Hall, Lee (2001) "Introduction." In Burgess, Melvin, Billy Elliot, Bishopbriggs: Chicken House.
- Hall, Stuart (1997) Representations and Cultural Signifying Practices. London: SAGE.
- Hambly, Wilfrid Dyson ([1926] 2009) Tribal Dancing and Social Development. Binsted: Dance Books.
- Hanna, Judith Lynne (1987) To Dance is Human: A Theory of Nonverbal Communication. Champaign: University of Chicago Press.
- Hanna, Judith Lynne (1988) Dance, Sex and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, Defiance and Desire. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hannah, Judith Lynne (2006) Dancing for Health: Conquering and Preventing Stress. California: AltaMira Press.
- Harris, Dale (3 August, 1974) "Balanchine told him he would either be a principal or nothing. Mitchell saw that his task was to excel." In The Guardian. pp. 8.
- Hart, Matthew Debretts (no date) Available at: <http://www.debretts.com/people-of-today/profile/21687/Matthew-Jason-HART> (Accessed: 15/01/16).
- Haskell, Arnold (January 1930) "Further studies in ballet: negro dancing." The Dancing Times. In Burt, Ramsay (ed.) (1998) Alien Bodies: Representations of Modernity, 'Race' and Nation in Early Modern Dance. London: Routledge. pp.445-446.
- Haskell, Arnold, L. (1962) "The meaning of classical dancing." British Journal of Aesthetics. 2(1) pp.55-58.
- Hill, Constance Valis (2002) "Katherine Dunham's Southlands: Protest in the Face of Repression." In DeFrantz, Thomas F. (2002) Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance, University of Wisconsin Press.
- Hill, Constance Valis (2010) Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hinton, Robert (1988) "Black dance in American history." In Myers, Gerald (ed.) The Black Tradition in American Modern Dance. Durham: American Dance Festival program.
- Hobson, Janell (2005) Venus in the Dark: Blackness and Beauty in Popular Culture. New York: Routledge.
- Holmes, Rachel (2007) The Hottentot Venus: The Life and Death of Saartjie Baartman (Born 1789 – Buried 2002). London: Bloomsbury.
- Homans, Jennifer (2011) Apollo's Angels: A History Of Ballet, London, Granta Books.
- hooks, bell (1992) Black Looks: Race and Representation. New York, NY: South End Press.
- Hoquet, T. (2015) Current Perspectives on Sexual Selection: What's Left After Darwin? New York, NY: Springer.
- Hornsby Jr. Alton (2005) A Companion to African American History. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Horst, Louis and Russell, Carroll ([1961] 1987) Modern Dance Forms in Relation to the Other Modern Arts. New Jersey: Princeton Book Company.

- Horst, Louis and Russell, Carroll ([1961] 2006) "Modern Dance Forms in Relation to the Other Modern Arts." In DeFrantz, Thomas F. (2006) Dancing Revelations: Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Horwitz, Dawn Lille (2002) "The New York Negro Ballet in Great Britain." In DeFrantz, Thomas F. (2002) Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. pp.334.
- Hudson, Mark (25 January, 2010) "Chris Ofili: 'I wander deep into the forest - where it's scary' Chris Ofili's gorgeous, kaleidoscopic paintings can be controversial. He tells Mark Hudson why he believes in 'going where the energy is'." In The Telegraph. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/7073175/Chris-Ofili-I-wander-deep-into-the-forest-where-its-scary.html>. (Accessed: 14/09/15).
- Hughes, Allen (13 April, 1963) "Ballet: 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'." The New York Times.
- Hughes, Allen (21 February, 1965) "Without Regard For Color." The New York Times, Sec. II, pp. 11.
- Hutchinson Guest, Anne (1988) Shawn's Fundamentals of Dance (Language of Dance). London: Routledge.
- Hutton, Christopher M. (2005) Race and the Third Reich. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Index on Censorship (no date) Case study: Exhibit B. Available at: <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2015/07/case-study-exhibit-b/>. (Accessed: 23/03/17).
- International Slavery Museum, (no date) Black dance: Black routes, Available at: <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/exhibitions/dance/> (Accessed: 02/02/17)
- Issac, Benjamin (2004) Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jaffray, Darryl (May, 1992) "A chance to Dance – A Royal Ballet/Dance Theatre of Harlem Project." The Dancing Times. pp.748–749.
- Jaynes, Gerald D. (2005) Encyclopaedia of African American Society. California: SAGE Publications.
- Jivraj, Stephen and Ludi Simpson (2015) Ethnic Identity and Inequalities in Britain: The Dynamics of Diversity. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Jiwani, Yasmin (2007) Discourses of Denial: Mediations of Race, Gender, and Violence. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- John, Suki (2012) Contemporary Dance in Cuba: Tecnica Cubana as Revolutionary Movement. Jefferson: McFarland.
- Johnson, Virginia (2012) "Do Black Dancers Have A Place In Ballet? We Say, Yes." In Huffpost Arts & Culture. 19 October Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/virginia-johnson/black-dancers-ballet_b_1989383.html (Accessed: 15/04/14).
- Jones, Angela (2011) African American Civil Rights: Early Activism and the Niagara Movement. Westport: Praeger Publishers.
- Jones, Chris (2001) "Archives of Dance: The Archive of the National Resource Centre for Dance in Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research." Vol. 19, No. 1 (Summer, 2001), pp.91–105.
- Jones-Haywood Dance School (no date) "About us." Available at: <http://www.joneshaywooddanceschool.com/history> (Accessed: 13/03/17)
- Jordan, Stephanie (16 December 1992) "Culture, Dance / joining the movement: Stephanie Jordan watches London City Ballet toughen up its repertoire for its Sadler's Wells triple bill." Available at: Independent, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/dance-joining-the-movement-stephanie-jordan-watches-london-city-ballet-toughen-up-its-repertoire-for-1563853.html> (Accessed: 05/03/16).
- Jordan, Stephanie (1993) Agon: A Musical/Choreographic Analysis," Dance Theatre Journal, Vol.25, No. 2 (Autumn).
- Jowitt, Deborah ([1973] 1983) "Monumental Martha." In Copeland, Roger & Cohen, Marshall (eds.) What Is Dance? Readings in Theory and Criticism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jowitt, Deborah (1992) Time and the Dancing Image. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Joyce Butler School of Dance (no date) Available at: <http://www.joycebutlerschoolofdance.co.uk/history> (Accessed: 17/07/15).
- Jules-Rosette, Bennetta (2007) Josephine Baker in Art and Life: The Icon and the Image.

- Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- Kaepler, Adrienne L. (2003) "An introduction to dance aesthetics." Yearbook for Traditional Music. 25 pp.153-162.
- Klarman, Michael J. (2006) From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality. Cary: Oxford University Press.
- Kant, Marion (2007) The Cambridge Companion to Ballet (Cambridge Companions to Music). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kassing, Gayle (2007) History of Dance: An Interactive Arts Approach. West Yorkshire: Human Kinetics Europe Ltd.
- Kealiinohomoku, Joann ([1970] 1993) "An anthropologist looks at ballet as a form of ethnic dance." In Copeland, Roger & Cohen, Marshall (eds.) What Is Dance? Readings in Theory and Criticism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Khan, Naseem (1976) The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain. London: Community Relations Commission.
- Khanna, Nikki (2010) "Country clubs and hip-hop thugs: Examining the role of social class and culture in shaping racial identity." In Korgen, Kathleen Odell, Multiracial Americans and Social Class: The influence of Social Class on Racial Identity. Abingdon: Routledge.
- King, Harold (no date) Available at: Who's Who Southern Africa, <http://whoswho.co.za/harold-king-8018> (Accessed: 20/01/16).
- Knight, Franklin W. (1997) Slave Societies of the Caribbean: 3 (General History of the Caribbean). London: Macmillian Caribbean.
- Kirstein, Lincoln (1934) In Dils, Ann and Ann Cooper Albright (2001) Moving History/ Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Kirstein, Lincoln (1978) Thirty Years: Lincoln Kirstein's The New York City Ballet. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Kirstein, Lincoln (1984) Four Centuries of Ballet. New York: Dover Publications Inc.
- Kisselgoff, Anna (3 May, 1971) "Harlem Company to Share Stage With City Ballet." In The New York Times, pp. 47.
- Kitch, Sally L. (2009) The Specter of Sex: Gendered Foundations of Racial Formation in the United States. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Knox, Robert (1850) The Race of Men: A Fragment. Philadelphia, PA: Lea & Blanchard.
- Kolb, Alexandra (2009) Performing Femininity: Dance and Literature in German Modernism. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Koritz, Amy (1995) "Re/moving boundaries from dance history to cultural studies." In Morris, Gay (ed.) Moving Words: Re-Writing Dance. London: Routledge.
- Kreemer, Constance (2008) Further Steps 2: Fourteen Choreographers on What's the R.A.G.E. in Modern Dance. London: Routledge.
- Kuda, Marie J. (2008) "Dancing for the stars: Mark Turbyfill." Baim, Tracey in Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Community. Surrey: Evanston.
- Kühl, Stefan (2002) The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lakes, Robin (2005) "The Hidden Authoritarian Roots in Western Concert Dance." In Jackson, Naomi and Shapiro-Phim, Toni Dance Human Rights, and Social Justice: Dignity in Motion. Maryland: Scarecrow Press.
- Lane, Jeremy F. (2000) Pierre Bourdieu: A Critical Introduction. London: Pluto Press.
- Lawson, Joan (1976) A History of ballet and its makers. London: Dance Books.
- Lawrence, William ([1819] 1984) "Lectures on physiology, zoology and the natural history of Man." In Fryer, Peter (ed.) Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain: Black People in Britain Since 1504. London: Pluto Press.
- Lawson, Joan (1976) A History of Ballet and its Makers. Binsted: Dance Books.
- Lebrecht, Norman (2001) Covent Garden, the Untold Story. New Hampshire: Northeastern University Press.
- Lee, Carol (2002) Ballet in Western Culture: A History of Its Origins and Evolution. London: Routledge.
- Legat, BEDE'S Legat School (no date) Available at: <http://www.bedes.org/legat-school.aspx#>, (Accessed: 22/11/15).
- Legat, Gustave "Mikhailovsky Theatre." (no date) Available at: http://www.mikhailovsky.ru/en/press/media/interview/tatiana_legat_interview/, (Accessed: 23/11/15).

- Legat, The Mimi Legat Collection (no date) Available at: <http://archiveshub.ac.uk/data/gb3208-rbs/mim.txt>, (Accessed: 19/11/15).
- Lewin, Yaël Tamar (2011) Nights Dancer. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Lewis, Shireen, (2006) Race, Culture, and Identity: Francophone West African and Caribbean Literature and Theory from Negritude to Creolite. Lexington: Lexington Books.
- Lexova, Irena (2003) Ancient Egyptian Dances. Mineola: Dover Publications Inc.
- Lipsett, Anthea (10 October 2008) "Education expert attacks schools for failing black Students." In The Guardian, in Education. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2008/oct/10/raceinschools-race> (Accessed: 20/07/09)
- London Olympics 2012 (no date) Available at: <http://www.roh.org.uk/news/balletic-climax-to-london-2012-closing-ceremony> (Accessed: 20/09/13)
- Lister, David (7 March 2014) "Ballet Black is a wonderful company. But it's a shame on the arts that it still exists." Independent. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/ballet-black-is-a-wonderful-company-but-its-a-shame-on-the-arts-that-it-still-exists-9177277.html> (Accessed: 07/03/16).
- Lloyd, Margaret (1949) The Borzoi Book of Modern Dance. Brooklyn: Dance Horizons.
- Locke, Alain ([1925]1999) The New Negro. London: Simon & Schuster.
- Long, Richard A. (1987) Black Americana. New York: Book Sales.
- Long, Richard A. (1989) The Black Tradition in American Dance. New York: Smithmark Publishers.
- Lott, Eric (1993) Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Love, Ben Ballet Soul. Available at: <http://www.balletsoul.org/benlove.htm> (Accessed: 06/01/16).
- Mackrell, Judith (9 November, 2009) Royal Ballet Triple Bill, The Guardian Online.
- Mackrell, Judith (20 June, 2012) "Actaeon stations: Chris Ofili and the Royal Ballet." The Guardian, G2, pp. 16.
- Macpherson, W. Sir. (24 February, 1999) The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-stephen-lawrence-inquiry> (Accessed: 07/06/07)
- Manning, Susan (2004) Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Marsh, Ian (2006) Theories of Crime. London: Routledge.
- Marsh, Sarah and Goldhill Olivia (4 September, 2012) "Where are the black ballet dancers? Where are all the black ballet dancers? Not in the world's elite companies. Sarah Marsh and Olivia Goldhill on dance's biggest blind spot." The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2012/sep/04/black-ballet-dancers> (Accessed: 12/09/16)
- Martin, John (30 April, 1931a) "Dance recital given by negro artist." New York Times. pp.27.
- Martin, John (30 August, 1931b) "Stravinsky's Petrouschka" Opens the Dance Centre's Season of Experiment – A Novel Theatre and Production." The New York Times. pp4.
- Martin, John (1933) The Modern Dance. New Jersey: Princeton Book Company.
- Martin, John (22 November, 1937) "Negro Ballet has debut in Harlem, Company Directed by Eugene von Grana in a Program of His Compositions." In The New York Times.
- Martin, John (1939) Introduction to the Dance. New York: Dance Horizons Republication.
- Martin, John (23 January, 1940) "De Mille Ballet Seen as Novelty; 'Black Ritual' Has Premiere at the Centre in Two Settings The Music is By Milhaud Sixteen Negro Girls Make Up Cast—Voices of Spring Ends the Ballet Theatre's Bill." The New York Times.
- Martin, John (19 May, 1947) "Ballet Society Offers Two Premieres." In The New York Times.
- Martin, John (11 May, 1952) "The Dance: Opera, A Glance at Solov's Frist Season at the 'Met'." In The New York Times.
- Martin, John (1952) World Book on Modern Ballet. New York: World Publishing Company.
- Martin, John (9 November, 1955) "Ballet: A Homecoming, City Troupe Back After Six Months' Travel." The New York Times, pp.40.
- Martin, John (15 December, 1957) "Dance: Inventory, Taking Stock of the New York City Ballet Company in Midseason." In The New York Times.

- Martin, John (14 April, 1960a) "Ballet: A Novelty Bows." In The New York Times.
- Martin, John (10 November, 1960b) "City Ballet Gives Novelty Feature." The New York Times.
- Martin, John ([1963] 1970) John Martin's Book of The Dance. New York: Tudor Publishing Company.
- Martin, John ([1939] 1965) The dance in theory. New Jersey: Princeton Book Company.
- Mason, Francis (1991) I remember Balanchine: recollections of the ballet master by those who knew him. New York: Doubleday.
- Maylor, Uvanney (2009) Black Children's' Achievement Programme Evaluation Available at: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-RR177.pdf>. (Accessed: 23/04/2012).
- Maynard, Olga (March, 1970) "Arthur Mitchell and the Dance Theatre of Harlem." Dance Magazine. pp.52–64.
- McDonagh, Don (1968) "Negroes in Ballet," New Republic. November 159, pp.41-44.
- McKim, Ross Rambert School of Ballet & Contemporary Dance (no date) Available at: <http://www.rambertschool.org.uk/about-us/staff/>, (Accessed: 16/10/15).
- McRobbie, Angela (1997) "Dance Narratives Fantasies of Achievement." In Desmond, Jane C; Meaning in Motion. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Meglin, Joellen (2007) "Choreographing Identities beyond Boundaries: La Guiablesse and Ruth Page's Excursions into World Dance (1926–1934)." Dance Chronicle, Vol. 30, No. 3 pp 435-469.
- Meisner, Nadine (4 August, 1998) "Obituary: William Louthier." Independent.co.uk, Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary-william-louthier-1169497.html> (Accessed: 03/03/11).
- Meisner, Nadine (22 February, 1999) "Obituary: Jack Carter." Independent. <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary-jack-carter-1072486.html> (Accessed: 5 March 2016).
- Meisner, Nadine (20 June, 2005) "Pamela May, Glamorous Royal Ballet dancer." Independent. Obituaries, Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/pamela-may-6144015.html> (Accessed: 12/09/15).
- No author (6 June 1985) "Memorial for John Martin." The New York Times. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/06/06/arts/memorial-for-john-martin.html> (Accessed: 20/03/14).
- Mercer, Kobena (1994) Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies. London: Routledge.
- Merrett, Sue (August, 1993) "London City Ballet Deadend or Crossroads?" The Dancing Times. pp.1085.
- Miles, Robert (1989) Racism. London: Routledge.
- Mitchell, Arthur (October, 1974) Dance comes to Harlem, Arthur Mitchell, director of Dance Theatre of Harlem talks to d & d with interjections from co-director, Karel Shook, Dance & Dancers 14-17.
- Mitchell, Arthur (1977) "Current Biography." (October 1966). In Emery, Lynne Fauley (1988) Black Dance from 1619 to today, NJ: Princeton Book Company.
- Monahan, Mark (9 July 2008) "Stravinsky, The Real Deal: bygone elegance short on oomph." The Telegraph. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/dance/3556040/Stravinsky-The-Real-Deal-bygone-elegance-short-on-oomph.html> (Accessed: 24/01/16).
- Montserrat, Dominic (1999) Sex & Society in Graeco-Roman Egypt. London: Routledge.
- Moore, Debbie (no date) Pineapple Dance Studio. Available at: <http://www.pineapple.uk.com/debbie-moore> (Accessed: 21/11/15).
- Morris Gay (2001) "Bourdieu, the Body, and Graham's Post-War Dance." In Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Winter, 2001), pp. 52-82.
- Morris, Gay (2006) A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Years, 1945–1960. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Mosaval, Johaar (no date) Available at: https://www.capetown.gov.za/en/mayor/Pages/Johaar_Mosaval.aspx (Accessed: 22/06/15).
- Murray, Jenny (28 November, 2001) BBC Radio 4, "Woman's Hour – Brenda Edwards."

- Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2001_48_wed_02.shtml (Accessed: 28/03/02).
- Murray, Susan & Ouelletta, Laurie (2008) Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture. New York: New York University Press.
- NC Natural and Cultural Resources (no date), Mel Tomlinson, Master of Ballet and Modern Dance, Available at: <http://www.ncdcr.gov/blog/2015/11/27/mel-tomlinson-master-of-ballet-and-modern-dance/> (Accessed: 06/03/17).
- Nevile, Jennifer (2008) Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick, 1250–1750. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Nicholls, Robert W. (1997) "African dance: Transition and continuity." In Welsh-Asante, Kariamu (ed.) African Dance: An Artistic, Historical, and Philosophical Inquiry. London: Africa Research Institute.
- Nicolaeva-Legat (no date) "Nadine Briger" Search Death Records. Available at: <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=41911027> (Accessed: 27/11/15).
- Northern Ballet. (no date) Available at: <https://northernballet.com/northern-ballet-full-story> (Accessed: 17/02/16).
- Norton, Leslie and Franklin Franklin (2007) Frederic Franklin: A Biography of the Ballet Star. Jefferson: McFarland & Co.
- Novack, Cynthia J. (1993) "Ballet, Gender and Cultural Power." In Thomas, Helen; Dance, Gender and Culture. London: Macmillan Press.
- Nureyev – London, Dancetabs (no date) Available at: <http://dancetabs.com/2013/07/english-national-ballet-tribute-to-rudolf-nureyev-london/> (Accessed: 06/03/16).
- New York City Ballet (no date) Available at: <http://www.nycballet.com/nycb/home/> (Accessed: March 2011).
- NYCB, (no date) New York City Ballet, Western Symphony, Available at <http://www.nycballet.com/ballets/w/western-symphony.aspx>, (Accessed: 06/06/14).
- O'Sullivan, Tim; John Hartley, Danny Saunders, Martin Montgomery, and John Fiske (1994) Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies. London: Routledge.
- Obenga, Théophile (2003) "Egypt: Ancient History of African Philosophy." In Wiredu, Kwasi A Companion to African Philosophy. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Oesterley, William Oscar Emil Sacred Dance in the Ancient World. Mineola: Dover Publications Inc.
- Office for National Statistics (no date) Statistical Bulletin, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2014 Provisional Results. Available at: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_385428.pdf. (Accessed: 18/11/15).
- Ofili, Chris (10 December, 2001) TATE, Available at: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/chris-ofili-2543/text-artist-biography>. (Accessed: 26/04/12)
- Osumare, Halifu (2016) "Socialization through the Arts." In Hunter, Lynette, Krimmer, Elisabeth and Lichtenfels, Peter, Sentient Performativities of Embodiment: Thinking alongside the Human. Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Owusu, Kwesi (2000) Black British Culture & Society. London: Routledge.
- Oyortey, Zagba (1995) "Still Dancing Downwards and Talking Back." In Thomas, H. Dance, Gender and Culture. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Page, Melvin E. (2003) Colonialism: An International, Social, Cultural and Political Encyclopedia. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Ltd.
- Painter, Nell Irvin ([2010] 2011) The History of White People. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Park, Merle, ISTD, Dame Merle Park (no date) Available at: <http://www.istd.org/staff/dame-merle-park/> (Accessed: 16/09/15).
- Parliament.UK Session 2012-2013 Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmcomeds/writev/suppcrc/sce67.htm> (Accessed: 20/10/14)
- Parry, Bruce (1989) Malcolm X, the last speeches. London: Pathfinder Press.
- Parry, Jann (27 July, 2013) "English National Ballet – Tribute to Rudolf Nureyev – London." DanceTabs. Available at: <http://dancetabs.com/2013/07/english-national-ballet-tribute-to-rudolf-nureyev-london/> (Accessed: 22/06/15).
- Pascal, Julia (20 December, 1990) "Black swan in to centre stage – Two black dancers are

- to disturb the Royal Ballet's thin, white uniformity, reports Julia Pascal." In The Guardian. pp.8.
- Patel, Tina; Standen, P.J. & Wright, Cecile (2010) Black Youth Matters: Transitions from School to Success. London: Routledge.
- Peacock, D. Keith (1999) Thatcher's Theatre: British Theatre and Drama in the Eighties. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Perpener, John (2005) African-American Concert Dance: The Harlem Renaissance and Beyond. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- Perron, Wendy (2001) "Dance in the Harlem Renaissance: Sowing seeds." In Phillips, Kimberley L., Pinson, Hermine, Thomas, Lorenzo & Wallinger, Hanna (eds.) Critical Voicings of Black Liberation: Resistance and Representation in the Americas. Volume 11 of FORECAAST, Forum for European Contributions to African American Studies. Munster: Lit Verlag.
- Plimmer, John (2015) Brickbats and Tutus. London: Austin Macauley Publishers.
- Pokin, Jeremy D. (2011) A Concise History of the Haitian Revolution. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Pool, Hannah (4 December, 2010) Black ballet: Pointe break. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2010/dec/04/black-ballet-cassa-pancho>, The Guardian, (Accessed: 07/03/16).
- Prickett, Stacey (1990) "Dance and the Workers' Struggle". Dance Research, Vol. 8, No. 1, Spring, 49-61.
- Prickett, Stacey (1994) "The People: Issues of Identity Within the Revolutionary Dance." In Garafola, Lynn Off, By and the People: Dancing on the Left in the 1930s (Studies in Dance History), Society of Dance History Scholars. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Reynolds, Nancy (1977) Repertory in Review: 40 Years of New York City Ballet. New York: Doubleday.
- Purshouse, Luke (2010) "Class and Thatcherism in Billy Elliot." In Kolb, Alexandra, Dance and Politics. Dortmund: Verlag.
- Racism, (no date) The Washington Post, Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-> (Accessed: 14/11/14)
- Railton, Diane and Watson, Paul (2011) Music Video and the Politics of Representation. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Rambert, (no date) "Dancers." Available at: <http://www.rambert.org.uk/about-us/people/dancers/kym-sojourn/>. (Accessed: 26/02/17)
- Reynolds, Nancy (1977) Repertory in Review: 40 Years of New York City Ballet. New York: Doubleday.
- Rinaldi, Robin (2010) Ballet (World of Dance) (Chelsea House). New York: Chelsea House Publishers.
- Robins, Gay (2008) The Art of Ancient Egypt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rose, Phyllis (1991) Jazz Cleopatra: Josephine Baker in Her Time. New York: Vintage.
- Rovine, Victoria L. (2015) African Fashion, Global Style: Histories, Innovations, and Ideas You Can Wear. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Roy, Sanjoy (16 June 2009) "Step-by-step guide to dance: English National Ballet." The Guardian. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/jun/16/guide-dance-english-national-ballet> (Accessed: 02/02/16).
- Roy, Sanjoy (20 September 2013) "How black dancers brought a new dynamism to British dance. An exhibition in Liverpool aims to acknowledge the richness of black dance in Britain, from the 1940s to the present day." The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/sep/20/black-dance-history-british-routes> (Accessed: 02/02/17).
- Royal Academy of Dance (no date) "Faculty." Available at: <http://www.rad.org.uk/learn-to-dance/our-dance-school-in-london/enrolling/faculty> (Accessed: 09/02/16).
- Royal Ballet School (no date) "History." Available at: <http://www.royalballetschool.org.uk/the-school/history/> (Accessed: 05/06/15).
- Royal Ballet School (no date) "Photograph Requirements." Available at: <http://www.royalballetschool.org.uk/training/auditions/photograph-requirements-full-time/> (Accessed: 22/11/15).
- Royal Opera House (ROH) (no date) "Annual Report 2010/2011." Available at:

- <http://static.roh.org.uk/about/pdfs/annualreview1011.pdf>. (Accessed: 22/06/15).
- Royal Opera House (ROH)(no date) "Annual Report 2015/2015."
Available at: https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/static.roh.org.uk/about/annual-review/pdfs/annual_review_1415.pdf. (Accessed: 19/03/17).
- Rupp-Eisenreich, Britta (2014) "Christoph Meiners' "New Science" (1747–1810)." In Bancel, Nicolas, David, Thomas & Thomas, Domonic (eds.) The Invention of Race: Scientific and Popular Representations. New York: Routledge.
- Sach, Curt (1937) World History of Dance. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Sayers, Lesley-Anne (1993) "'She might pirouette on a daisy and it would not bend': Images of femininity and dance." In Thomas, Helen Dance, Gender and Culture. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sayers, Lesley-Anne (1997) "Madam Smudge, Some Fossils, and Other Missing Links: Unearthing the Ballet Class." In Thomas, Helen; Dance in the City. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Schmidt, Tyler T. (2013) Desegregating Desire: Race and Sexuality in Cold War American Literature. Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi.
- Scholl, Tim (1994) From Petipa to Balanchine: Classical Revival and the Modernisation of Ballet. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Schott-Billmann, France (2014) Primitive Expression and Dance Therapy: When Dancing Heals (Explorations in Mental Health). London: Routledge.
- Schwartz, Peggy and Schwartz, Murray (2011) The Dance Claimed Me: A Biography of Pearl Primus. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scottish Ballet. (no date) Available at: <http://www.scottishballet.co.uk/the-company/history.html> (Accessed: 08/01/16).
- Segal, Ronald (1996) The Black Diaspora. London: Faber and Faber.
- Shanturia Dance Theatre (no date) "Malachi Spaulding." Available at: <http://www.shanturiadancetheatre.com/page4.htm>, (Accessed: 11/10/11).
- Shay, Antony (2008) Dancing Across Borders: The American Fascination with Exotic Dance Forms. Jefferson: McFarland & Co.
- Shilling, Chris ([1993] 2003) The Body and Social Theory. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Siegel, Beatrice (1979) Alicia Alonso: The story of a ballerina. London: Frederick Warne.
- Singh, Upinder (2009) A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Singleton, Tyrone (no date) "Birmingham Royal Ballet." Available at: <https://www.brb.org.uk/masque/index.htm?act=Person&urn=30136>. (Accessed: 23/06/14)
- Snow, Georgia (25 March, 2015) "Cultural tourism adds £3.2bn a year to London economy." In The Stage. Available at: <https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/2015/cultural-tourism-brings-3-2bn-year-london-economy/>. (Accessed: 18/03/17).
- Smith, Clyde (1998) On authoritarianism in the dance classroom. In Shapiro, Sherry B. (ed.) Dance, Power, and difference: critical and feminist perspectives on dance education. Champaign: Human Kinetics.
- Smith, Jessie Carney (2013) Black Firsts: 4,000 Ground-Breaking and Pioneering Historical Events, Michigan: VISIBLE INK.
- Smith, Merril, D. (2004) Encyclopaedia of Rape. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Solanke, Lyiola (2009) Making Anti-Racial Discrimination Law: A Comparative History of Social Action and Anti-Racial Discrimination Law. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Solomos, John & Back, Les (1996) Racism and Society. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Somaiya, Ravi (10 April, 2008) Young, gifted - and ignored, Why are there no black ballerinas in the UK's big companies? By Ravi Somaiya, The Guardian, G2 Section, pp 26.
- Sörgel, Sabine (2007) Dancing Postcolonialism: The National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica Dance. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Southbank Centre (no date) "Royal Festival Hall Auditorium." Available at: <http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/venues/venue-hire/venue-details/royal-festival-hall-auditorium> (Accessed: 23/02/16).
- Sowell, Debra Hickenlooper (1998) Christensen Brothers: An American Dance Epic, London: Routledge.
- Speck, Scott and Cisneros, Evelyn (2003) Ballet For Dummies. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Speitkamp, Winfried (2015) German Colonialism and the Formation of African Heritage. In

- Falser, Michael Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission: From Decay to Recovery. Heidelberg: Springer.
- Starkey, Brando Simeo (2015) In Defense of Uncle Tom: Why Blacks Must Police Racial Loyalty. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Stearns, Marshall & Jean (1994) Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance. Boston: DaCapo Press.
- Stodelle, Ernestine (14 January 1968) "Negro Dancer: Gift to America Beyond Value." In Emery, Lynne Fauley (1988) Black Dance from 1619 to Today. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Book Company. pp.319.
- Stokes, Mason (2001) The Color of Sex: Whiteness, Heterosexuality and the Fictions of White Supremacy. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Straker, Carol, CSDf (no date) Available at: http://www.csdf.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=115&Itemid=197 (Accessed: 19/10/15).
- Studylib, Arts Council of England, (no date) "Jane Hackett." Available at: <http://studylib.net/doc/8043322/please-enter-name-here> (Accessed: 21/04/16).
- Sutcliffe, Tom (19 November, 1974) "Royal Variety Performance at the Palladium." The Guardian, pp. 10.
- Sutton, Tina (2013) The Making of Markova – Diaghilev's Baby Ballerina to Groundbreaking. New York: Icon, Pegasus.
- Taper, Bernard ([1963]1996) Balanchine: A Biography. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Tatarkiewicz, Wladyslaw; Jean Harrell, Cyril K. Barrett and Danuta Petsch (2006) History of Aesthetics. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Taubman, Howard (8 October, 1954) "Marian Anderson signed to Sing At the Metropolitan This Season." In The New York Times, pp25 column 6.
- Taurman, Howard (1 June, 1952) "Met Tour in Balance, Value of Trio is Great Despite Difficulties." The New York Times.
- The George Balanchine Trust (no date) Available at: <http://balanchine.com/content/site/show/faq> (Accessed: 05/03/11).
- The Voice (29 September, 1997) First Black Star for Royal Ballet, London, pp. 3.
- Tharp, Kenneth Olumuyiwa (2013) "Do we need this term black dance?" In Carty, Hilary S., Bob Ramdhanie and Pawlet Brookes, Hidden Movement: Contemporary Voices of Black British Dance. Leicester: Serendipity Artists Movement Ltd pp17-25.
- Thembanis, Sarah L. (2014) The Set-Up Men: Race, Culture and Resistance in Black Baseball. Jefferson: McFarland & Co.
- Thomas, Helen (1993) Dance, Gender and Culture. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Thomas, Helen (1995) Dance, Modernity and Culture: Explorations in the Sociology of Dance. London: Routledge.
- Thomas, Hugh (1997) The Slave Trade: History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440–1870. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Thompson, Ayanna (2001) Passing Strange: Shakespeare, Race, and Contemporary America. Oxford: OUP.
- Thompson, Della (1996) The Oxford Compact English Dictionary. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Thorpe, Edward (1989) Black Dance. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Tiérou, Alphonse (1992) Dooplé: the Eternal Law of African Dance. Hove: Psychology Press.
- Tomlinson, Sally (2008) Race and Education: Policy and Politics in Britain. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Tuckett, William Royal Opera House (no date) Available at: <http://www.roh.org.uk/people/will-tuckett> Independent. (Accessed: 07/01/16)
- Urdang, Leonie "Urdang Academy." (no date) Available at: <http://www.theurdangacademy.com/about/history/>, (Accessed: 18/11/15).
- Urlin, Ethel Lucy (1912) Dancing Ancient and Modern. London: The Westminster Press.
- Valis Hill, Constance (2002) "Katharine Dunham's Southlands: Protest in the Face of Repression." In Thomas DeFrantz Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Voss, Hans-Georg (2013) Curiosity and Exploration: Theories and Results. Amsterdam: Academic Press.
- Wallace-Sanders, Kimberly (2002) Skin Deep, Spirit Strong: The Black Female Body in

- American Culture. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Watson, Keith (5 August, 1999) "They were Britain's first black dance company. How come on one's ever heard of them?" In The Guardian, Thursday Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/1999/aug/05/artsfeatures1>. (Accessed: 22/05/14)
- Wayne Sleep (no date) Available at: <http://www.waynesleep.org/about-wayne-sleep/> (Accessed: 25/02/16).
- Welsh-Asante, Kariamu (1996) African Dance: An Artistic, Historical, and Philosophical Inquiry. Africa Research & Publications.
- Wilce, Hilary (29 March, 2007) "Ballet for everyone: Pupils get a chance to dance – Why shouldn't children from less-affluent homes become ballet dancers? The Royal Opera House is auditioning for new talent in primary schools. Hilary Wilce reports." The Independent Available at: http://news.independentco.uk/education_news/article2399667.ece, (Accessed: 13/06/10).
- Williams, Drid ([1991] 2004) Anthropology and the Dance: Ten Lectures. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- Williams, Evan "Corbis Images." (no date) Available at: <http://www.corbisimages.com/stock-photo/rights-managed/RJ002023/evan-williams-in-petrushka> (Accessed: 16/01/16)
- Willis, Paul (1996) Common Culture. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Wilson, John Albert (1956) The Culture of Ancient Egypt. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Woodward, Kathryn (1997) Identity and Difference (Culture, Media and Identities series). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Wulff, Helena (1998) Ballet Across Borders: Career and Culture in the World of Dancers. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Wyatt, Daisy (24 September 2014) "Exhibit B 'human zoo' show cancelled by the Barbican following campaigner protest." The Independent. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/news/exhibit-b-human-zoo-show-cancelled-by-the-barbican-following-protest-9753519.html> (Accessed: 20/05/15).
- X, Malcolm (1966) The Autobiography of Malcolm X. New York: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Yarley, Jim (9 May, 1998) "Coda for a Homeless Dancer; After Years in the Shadows, a Sudden Burst of Fame." The New York Times, Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/09/nyregion/coda-for-a-homeless-dancer-after-years-in-the-shadows-a-sudden-burst-of-fame.html?pagewanted=all>, (Accessed: 01/08/16).
- Young, Lola (1995) Fear of the Dark: 'Race', Gender and Sexuality in the Cinema. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Youngerman, Suzanne (1974) "Curt Sachs and His Heritage: A Critical Review of World History of the Dance with a Survey of Recent Studies that Perpetuate His Ideas." Congress on Research in Dance, CORD News. 6(2) pp.6-19.

INTERVIEWS

- Akinleye, Adesola (2013) Interviewed, 24 September.
- Bailey, Denzil (2010) Interviewed, 26 May.
- Dynott, Shevelle (2010) Interviewed, 14 April.
- Elie, Mark (2011) Interviewed, 24 April.
- Felix, Julie (2015) Interviewed, 24 August.
- Garrett-Glassman, Brenda (2010) Interviewed, 25 May.
- Gotobed, Chantelle (2010) Interviewed, 4 June.
- Jaffray, Darryl (2010) Interviewed 14 June.
- Love, Ben (2012) Interviewed, 17 September.
- Paluch, Matthew (2014) Interviewed, 22 February.
- Panton, Darren (2006) Interviewed, 21 November.
- Panton, Darren (2008) Interviewed, 10 October.
- Spaulding, Malachi (2011) Interviewed, 30 July.

Straker, Carol (2002) Interviewed, 16 July.
Thomas, Lisa (2011) Interviewed, 17 October.
Williams, Evan (2010) Interviewed, 7 June.
Wilson, Ayanna (2015) Interviewed, 7 August.